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# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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# House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky).

## DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
*December 13, 2017.*

I hereby appoint the Honorable HAROLD ROGERS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

## MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

## DACA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, every day, 122 people with DACA lose their protection from deportation. They lose their government-issued identification that allowed them to stay in this country and work legally.

DACA is the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program that the President ended in September and which will completely expire in March. But let's be clear: people don't have until March. People are already losing their DACA coverage on a daily basis.

So when reporters and politicians say that Congress can stall until March to enact the Dream Act, they are flat wrong. We cannot wait until March. The Dream Act and the protections of the DACA program are not light switches we can turn on and off. Every day we delay the passage of the Dream Act, another 122 DACA recipients lose their status. They go from being documented to being undocumented, and their worlds are turned upside down.

It is not just their lives, but also the lives of American citizens who love them, who employ them, and who rely on them.

Young DREAMers came forward and reported to the Department of Homeland Security and paid their own money for a criminal background check by the FBI. In fact, many of them have successfully completed their paperwork and biometrics three times. They paid all of this processing—the paperwork, the background checks, and the fingerprints—with their own money.

By definition, they arrived in the United States as children, and, by definition, they all arrived at least 10 years ago—a year and a half before Obama even got sworn in as President.

There are 800,000 of them—800,000 young Americans who have been playing by the rules, doing everything their government has asked them to do, and who have been living productive lives in communities in every State of the Union. As of today, more than 12,000 have lost their DACA status and protection.

Let me tell you about a few of them. Mayron owns three businesses. He lives in Washington State and has lived in the U.S. since he was 11 years old. His DACA expires on December 22, the day after the CR is set to expire and the day we are all supposed to go home and return to our families for the Christmas holiday and New Year's.

He submitted his DACA renewal well before the application deadline that was arbitrarily set for last October. But he made a mistake. His check was for $465, not $495, so he will be deportable as of December 22. He has lived his entire life in the United States, yet, if Republicans and the President have their way, he will be sent back to Honduras. His three businesses and those who work there? Who knows what will happen to them.

Another DACA recipient named Saul is from California. Thanks to the security and stability provided by DACA, he has pursued a career in education. I was a teacher, and I know that the monetary rewards are few, but the rewards for your soul are many, and the rewards to our society of having dedicated teachers are just as priceless.

But without DACA and without the Dream Act, Saul has no future in teaching, and we may squander the passion he would bring to a classroom. His DACA expires on December 29, and this is anything but a Merry Christmas for him as we drag our feet here in the Congress of the United States.

Finally, there is Brittany in New York. She is a childcare provider who works with infant twins—one of whom has a severe health condition. Her employers are now scrambling because Brittany's DACA expired last Thursday, and she has no clear legal path forward. The family said: We are devastated at the thought that she may not be able to work in this country and know we won't find another caregiver who is as reliable, nurturing, and unshakeable as Brittany.

Most Americans don't understand why taking away legal status from a childcare provider who is employed, cherished, and loved by her employers will somehow create law and order. How does creating more undocumented immigrants help? It doesn't make America great. It doesn't even strengthen security or our economy. I



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don't think it even benefits the Republican Party politically to send this young American woman like her away.

But it is up to Republicans and Democrats to stand up for Brittany, Saul, and Mayron. Democrats must be clear that we value the contributions of these young people and will not allow their stories to be ignored.

Republicans—even the brave ones who have said that they are for solving the plight of the DACA kids—must do more than write a letter or whisper quietly in the Halls that they hope something happens.

It is up to us right now. I am not leaving, and I am not shutting up until we do.

## GOD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, this is a very difficult speech for me to give.

God works in mysterious ways.

When you are an elected official, missed votes require an explanation. That is why I disclose this otherwise very personal, very private, and very humbling matter.

On Halloween night, after votes, as I stood on the Capitol steps, my doctor called and said: Congressman BROOKS, bad news. You have high-risk prostate cancer. I felt an adrenaline rush as a chill went up and down my spine.

By way of background, prostate cancer kills almost 27,000 American men each year and is the third leading cause of cancer deaths behind only lung and colorectal cancers. Seventy-one percent of prostate cancer patients die in less than 5 years if the prostate cancer has spread beyond the abdominal cavity. In stark contrast, almost all prostate cancer patients live longer than 5 years if the cancer is discovered early and killed before it spreads.

For example, my father discovered his prostate cancer early. He lived four decades after his prostatectomy. My grandfather discovered his prostate cancer too late. He died not long thereafter.

After my doctor's diagnosis, I called my wife, Martha, who was back home in Huntsville welcoming trick-or-treaters and shared the bad news. That night was one of the loneliest nights apart in our 41-year marriage. I kept thinking about my wonderful family: What do I do next? How do I beat this cancer?

Overnight, I formed a plan and began implementing it.

In an emotional meeting, I informed my Washington staff of my cancer, that I was immediately flying to Huntsville after a CT scan that afternoon, and that, for medical reasons, I would be in Alabama the rest of the week.

Based on advice from friends and doctors, I chose Dr. Scott Tully as my treating physician. Dr. Tully is widely respected and has performed more than 3,000 prostatectomies. On Thursday, Martha and I drove to Birmingham to obtain Dr. Tully's insight about treatment options and risks. He advised a radical prostatectomy.

At Dr. Tully's direction, I undertook a heart stress test and a nuclear bone scan. Finally, I got some good news. My CT scan and nuclear bone scan revealed no cancer beyond the prostate. My heart stress test confirmed that I am strong enough to undergo the 2- to 3-hour surgery.

Prostate cancer mortality data is compelling. Speed is critical in the fight against prostate cancer. In compliance with the 2017 House calendar that set end-of-year votes on December 14, and at some risk to myself, Dr. Tully and I delayed my surgery until December 15—this Friday—and set a postsurgery medical procedure for December 20. My plan was to recuperate at home during the holidays with my family and return to Washington for a full workload when Congress reconvenes on January 3.

Unfortunately, last week the House Speaker abruptly changed the House voting calendar that I relied on to set my surgery. As a result, next week I will miss House floor votes unless I am unexpectedly medically cleared to travel.

There are three insights from my experience that I wish to share with the public. First, don't ever, ever take your health or family for granted. During the holidays, enjoy your family because no one—no one—is promised tomorrow.

Second, I encourage age-appropriate men to have regular PSA tests. While PSA tests do not diagnose cancer, my PSA spike persuaded me to have the prostate biopsy that revealed my high-risk prostate cancer early enough for me to enjoy a very good cure prognosis.

Third, I ran for the Senate in 2017. I finished third out of nine candidates in the Republican primary. Had I won, I would not have had time for my physical and PSA test. I would not have had a prostate biopsy. I would not now know about my high-risk prostate cancer that requires immediate surgery.

In retrospect, and paradoxically, losing the Senate race may have saved my life. Yes, God does work in mysterious ways.

## CELEBRATING THE 381ST BIRTHDAY OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 381st birthday of the National Guard.

A component of the United States Army, the National Guard is primarily composed of citizen soldiers who hold down full-time civilian jobs or attend school. At the same time, National Guard members are available to provide support and protection for their States or to be called for military operations for the country. They serve their community and their country.

Each U.S. State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the territories of Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands maintain both an Army National Guard and an Air National Guard.

The Massachusetts General Court issued an order on December 13, 1636, requiring all able-bodied men between the ages of 16 and 60 to create a standing Army for protection. With that order, what we now know as America's National Guard was born. The idea was simple: establish an Army of citizen soldiers who could be called upon to fight when needed.

In honor of the National Guard's birthday, here are some lesser known facts about the branch: each member of the National Guard is sworn to uphold two constitutions, Federal and State. The term ''National Guard'' didn't become an official term until 1916. 50,000 members of the National Guard were called to take on various missions during the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Only two Presidents have served in the National Guard in its modern structure: Harry S. Truman and George W. Bush.

The National Guard is older than the Army. Militias were used as early as 1636 to protect British colonies. The U.S. Army wasn't formed until the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

American Samoa is the only territory of the United States to not have a National Guard unit.

National Guard units were called minutemen during the American Revolution due to their rapid response ability.

The most senior member of each State National Guard unit is the adjutant general. Some States elect the adjutant general while others have their Governor appoint someone to that position.

The National Guard formed one of the first all-African-American units in U.S. military history, the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers. Their creation was met with mixed reactions, but the unit serves to this day, and the first African American to receive a Medal of Honor, William Harvey Carney, hailed from it.

The National Guard is second only to the United States Army in terms of number of members.

Mr. Speaker, I commend all those who join the ranks of the esteemed National Guard. They answer the call of duty to protect their community and their country. We are grateful for their service and proud of their commitment.

Happy 381st birthday to the National Guard.

□ 1015

## HONORING SHERIFF'S DEPUTY DAVID SOLIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the outstanding service and heroism of one of California's finest, Riverside County Sheriff's Deputy David Solis, who serves in Coachella, California.

On May 25, 2017, Deputy Solis engaged in a chase with a suspect in a vehicle, which led to a foot pursuit. The suspect unexpectedly drew a firearm and shot Deputy Solis six times at close range. Though he was critically injured, Deputy Solis continued to feed his team information, ensuring other officers could secure the area, which led to the eventual capture of the suspect.

Incredibly, Deputy Solis was back to work after just 4 months of recovery. His bravery, strength, and professionalism exemplify the very best in law enforcement, which is why his department selected him to receive the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor for exhibiting ''extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty.'' It is the highest decoration for public safety officers.

Deputy Solis, you truly embody these values. Your courage has made our entire valley a safer place. You and all law enforcement officers put yourselves in harm's way each day to keep us safe.

On behalf of my wife, Monica, and the entire 36th Congressional District, I thank you, Martha, and your children—Caleb, Jonah, Grace, Jeremy, and Penny—for your service and sacrifice.

### GOP TAX PLAN

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, the tax plan being considered in conference right now will be devastating for the people I represent, in particular, seniors, homeowners, students, and taxpaying middle class Californians.

According to every nonpartisan estimate out there, this tax plan will blow a giant hole in our deficit, a $1 trillion hole, in fact.

So my first question is: Who is going to pay for it?

Well, next year it will be our seniors, to the tune of $25 billion in cuts to Medicare.

And 10 years from now?

We will be looking at cuts to programs that invest in our children and our future, like Pell grants for our students.

My next question is: Who will actually benefit?

Well, it won't be California homeowners, who, on average, will see their taxes go up by $800 a year. It won't be hardworking families in southern California, who will be double-taxed on their income.

It will be corporations that will get free rein to ship jobs overseas, because any income ''earned'' abroad will be completely tax free.

It will be the wealthiest 1 percent who get more than 50 percent of the tax cuts in this plan, while sticking our children with the bill.

I want to simplify and modernize our Tax Code to give middle class families the purchasing power they need to improve their lives and spark the economy. This plan, unfortunately, will further burden the middle class for the benefit of millionaires.

So, let's start over. Let's come back to the table to make real, bipartisan tax reform a reality and to give real tax cuts to all the people we serve.

## HONORING PAUL WENGER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to honor a true friend and advocate of agriculture. For the past 8 years, Paul Wenger has led the California Farm Bureau with passion and dedication, ensuring that one of our State's most vital industries remains at the forefront worldwide. As a longtime native of California's Tenth District and the city of Modesto, Paul has consistently been engaged in making our community a better place.

As a third-generation farmer, Paul grows almonds and walnuts on the family farm, which includes property purchased by his grandfather in 1910. His farming operation also includes a marketing component for processed almonds and walnuts through his Wood Colony Nut Company.

Paul attended Modesto Junior College, or MJC, before transferring to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where he earned a degree in animal science.

From 1990 to 1994, he served as president of the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau. Three years later, Paul became a statewide officer, when he was elected second vice president. He was then elected first vice president in 2005. He also served as a member of the Bureau's board of directors and chaired its water advisory committee and water development task force.

Since 2009, Paul has served as president of the statewide California Farm Bureau. He has been on the front lines fighting for water rights and supplies, less government overreach, immigration reform, and sustainable working lands that are essential to keeping farming and ranching alive.

In 2014, he received the Stanislaus Farm Bureau's Distinguished Service Award and has been long praised for his effective messaging, engagement, passion, and unwavering principles.

Paul has successfully given California a strong voice at the national table by serving on the board of directors for the American Farm Bureau.

Alongside his work to advocate for our region at the State and national level, Paul has dedicated countless hours to our local community as well. He served on the Salida Volunteer Fire Department, the Hart-Ransom School Board of Trustees, the Central Valley Farmland Trust Trustee Council, and the Stanislaus Land Trust and Agricultural Pavilion boards, just to name a few. He has been very active.

Paul's tenure as president ends this year, but I am confident he will continue to play a vital role in the advocacy and evolution of our agriculture industry.

I thank Paul for his hard work and continued friendship. I thank his wife, Deborah, his three sons, and their grandchildren for graciously sharing Paul with the farmers, ranchers, and our community, who have relied on his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and recognizing my good friend for his unwavering leadership, accomplishments, and contributions on behalf of the agriculture industry.

## HONORING THE LIFE OF LOWELL HAWTHORNE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to a great man, a loving husband and father, a visionary entrepreneur, a philanthropist and humanitarian, my beloved and dear friend, Mr. Lowell Hawthorne of the Bronx, New York.

Lowell Hawthorne immigrated to the United States from the beautiful island nation of Jamaica in 1981 and, like most immigrants to our country, began his pursuit of the American Dream.

After working his way up the administrative ranks of the New York City Police Department as an accountant handling police pensions, he was bitten by the entrepreneurial bug and started a home-based business doing tax returns for coworkers and friends on the force.

Determined to provide for his family a life that he never had, in 1989, inspired by his father and sisters, who were bakers, and with the financial support of his wife and siblings, he would go on to open the first Golden Krust Bakery, on East Gun Hill Road in the Bronx, New York. His specialties included the Jamaican beef patty, Caribbean baked goods, and other culinary delights.

From there, his entrepreneurial talents, work ethic, and dogged determination allowed him to soar, methodically expanding his empire to include over 120 stores in nine States across the country. Golden Krust Caribbean Bakery & Grill would become the first Caribbean-American-owned business in the United States to be granted a franchise license. Producing more than 50 million beef, chicken, and vegetable patties a year, Golden Krust is also the largest Caribbean-American-owned business in the Nation.

Lowell has been described by his employees as a nice boss, a wonderful guy,

a God-fearing man, also, as someone who cared deeply for his staff, his family, his community, and the beloved land of his birth, Jamaica.

He leaves to cherish his legacy his devoted wife of 34 years, Lorna, and his four children, who all worked for the company: Daren, Omar, Monique, and Haywood.

I admire Lowell for bringing our shared love of Jamaican culture to life on a larger scale through food and fellowship. His success story is an inspiration to all who continue to dream the American Dream. I personally was honored to have known him.

As part of a tight-knit Caribbean diaspora and Jamaican community, he was considered a beloved part of my extended family, so much so that my mother adopted him, as mothers often do, and took him under her wing and into her heart. Lowell was more than a friend; he was a brother.

Today, I honor his life and living legacy. I will miss my friend and will cherish him always. On behalf of the people of the Ninth Congressional District of New York, the Clarke family, and myself, I wish to express my most deepest, profound condolences to the family and friends of the honorable Lowell Hawthorne.

## PLANNED PARENTHOOD INVESTIGATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, we learned of the Department of Justice's decision to open an investigation in the appalling practice of abortion providers harvesting and trafficking aborted babies' body parts for profit—finally.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues surely remember, in July of 2015, senior Planned Parenthood officials were caught on camera discussing how abortion procedures could systematically be altered in order to preserve certain organs so that they could be sold to researchers. They talked of ''crushing'' here and ''crushing'' there, being careful to preserve little parts of a baby's body because they are valuable on the research market. They talked of menus for organs and how lucrative these arrangements could be.

It was sick, callous, and completely inhuman. It also happens to be against the law. Soon thereafter, several of my colleagues and I called for an investigation into these disturbing revelations.

But, Mr. Speaker, our demands fell on deaf ears. Attorney General Loretta Lynch turned a blind eye and didn't pursue an investigation. Even after multiple congressional committees referred their own investigations to the authorities at the Department of Justice, nothing was done.

At the time, I said it was disappointing, but hardly surprising. We all know how much political weight Planned Parenthood throws around in this town. But, Mr. Speaker, in this country, no one is above the law.

That is why I was so pleased to receive word that the Department of Justice, now under the leadership of Attorney General Jeff Sessions, appears to be following up on the evidence and taking our calls for an investigation seriously.

In a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee, Assistant Attorney General Stephen Boyd, who I am proud to say was formerly my chief of staff, requested unredacted documents from the committee's investigation into the suspected harvesting and trafficking of fetal tissue. He said, for now, the documents are for investigative use only, and a formal resolution may be required for further proceedings, such as a grand jury.

I appreciate the Department of Justice's attention to this, and I know I am not the only one who will be watching this closely.

When the terrible videos first surfaced in 2015, I immediately came to the House floor and stood right here in the well and spoke out about this outrageous activity. Someone later told me I was the first one to speak on the floor, and, Mr. Speaker, I will be the last, if I have to.

I said then: ''I promise . . . we are not done talking about this.'' Today, I am glad that has proven to be true.

□ 1030

## LET'S TAKE CARE OF THOSE AT THE BOTTOM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, again, I express my gratitude for the opportunity to speak from the well of the Congress of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is some misinformation being accorded the American people. Misinformation because there seems to be a belief among those who are pushing a tax plan that will put us an additional $1.5 trillion, more or less, in debt. There seems to be the notion being pushed that somehow by giving major corporations major breaks, these major corporations will make a major concession and they will move major amounts of dollars down to those who work at the very lower levels of their businesses: those who clean the floors. Those who are there, they are called the night crew, and they make it possible for those who come in, in the daylight, to have a clean office and a better work environment.

There seems to be a notion that somehow there will be a trickle down to them. I don't see the empirical evidence to support this position. I encourage my friends who believe in trickle down to move to bubble up and allow the minimum wage to be raised. Raise the minimum wage and make it a living wage.

If you can get it to those at the top, why not assure those at the bottom some degree of benefit from the $1.5 trillion?

You but only have to decide that you will make a part of this tax bill a raise in the minimum wage. Make it so. You can do it. And if you should do it, you will find that there will be some people who will appreciate the fact that you didn't just look out for those at the top, that you also decided that you were going to take care of those at the bottom.

Finally this, Mr. Speaker, to those who believe that people will pull themselves up by bootstraps that they don't have, please know this:

Dear brothers and sisters: People who are poor cannot do more with less. There is a belief that if you are rich, you need more to do more. But if you are poor, you can do more with less. If poor people could do more with less, there would be no poor people.

Let's take care of those at the bottom. Let the system bubble up, as opposed to trickle down.

## MODERNIZING SNAP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue that is receiving a lot of attention both in the media and in the House Agriculture Committee, and that is our Nation's largest anti-hunger problem, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

As we approach the upcoming farm bill, I would offer a brief perspective, something that I have been keeping in the front of my mind throughout all of these conversations.

Mr. Speaker, SNAP is about families that are living paycheck to paycheck here in our Nation. It is about helping households across this country, not so much worry about where the next meal is coming from, but letting them worry more about their children's education, their own work, and, quite frankly, their own future. It is about helping every citizen realize the American Dream by modernizing a program that helps lift folks out of poverty, rather than trapping them there.

Mr. Speaker, this will not be easy. There will be people who demonize our efforts. Some will even criticize the process. We will have those who paint doomsday scenarios about what we are trying to get done. Some will say it is too much, too soon, and too fast.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Our committee has spent 3 years examining every aspect of this program. We have heard from citizens across this Nation who have been helped by SNAP, and we identified modest improvements that we believe will better serve those in greatest need.

Mr. Speaker, we must get this policy right. As I said, we must get this policy right.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that these reforms are about maintaining the American value of generosity, a generosity that says no American should go to bed hungry each night. But, Mr. Speaker, it also strengthens that great American tradition of self-efficiency that compels us to work to improve our own stations in life.

By doing this, by modernizing SNAP, by making these changes that incentivize work, encouraging collaboration, and promote and improve access, we will be ensuring better nutrition for our American families. And, as budgets tighten in our country and across this government, we will be preserving a program that must be preserved for future generations.

## HONORING JIM HASLAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, one of the finest men I have ever known, Jim Haslam, turns 87 today.

Mr. Haslam is one of the greatest leaders Tennessee has ever had, and he is certainly our greatest philanthropist.

He came to the University of Tennessee at the age of 17 to play football for the legendary football coach, General Robert Neyland. He played on some of the greatest teams in Tennessee history, teams that won almost every game, losing only four games in the 3 years that Jim Haslam played.

In 1958, he bought a small gas station in Gate City, Virginia, on the Tennessee line. I believe I read at one point that he paid just $6,000 for that four-pump station. Through much hard work and long hard hours, he slowly built that one little gas station into the Pilot Flying J chain. He is still involved in the business today.

We frequently tell people in the military: Thank you for your service.

That is a good thing to do. However, we don't show nearly enough appreciation for people who start small businesses, turn them into bigger businesses, and provide good jobs for people and their families.

The Pilot Flying J Company now has over 750 travel centers in 43 States and in Canada, and provides jobs for over 27,000 people. Very few people in this world can say that they are providing jobs for 27,000 people.

Jim Haslam has now contributed over $100 million to the University of Tennessee. He and his family have contributed very large sums of money to almost every good cause in east Tennessee, in addition to the university.

He and his wife, Natalie, do not just contribute money. They are very active in all sorts of civic and charitable groups in Knoxville.

He is also a very patriotic man and has great love for this country. He served his country in our Nation's military.

He is one of the biggest contributors to the Republican Party in this Nation and is personally involved in many campaigns. He has been a very good friend and supporter for both me and my late father, and I am very grateful to him.

Most important of all, Jim Haslam has been a good family man. He and his late wife raised three children. Then, many years ago, he married Natalie, a longtime friend; and between them, they raised six outstanding children.

One of his sons, Bill Haslam, is our great Governor in Tennessee and a chairman of the Republican Governors Association.

His other son, Jimmy Haslam, now leads the Pilot Flying J Company and owns and operates the Cleveland Browns football team.

Through hard work, honesty, dedication, and simple human kindness, Jim Haslam has lived the American Dream. He has touched thousands of lives in good and positive ways. This Nation is the greatest country in the history of this world because of people like Jim Haslam. This Nation is a better place today because of the life he has led. I salute him on his 87th birthday and give him best wishes for many, many more.

## GRANDFATHER RANGER DISTRICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Grandfather Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest and community partners.

Recently, the Grandfather Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest received the coveted 2017 Restored and Resilient Landscapes Award from the U.S. Forest Service southern region.

The Ranger District received this award due to efforts to produce a healthy and more diverse forest. This project, which began in 2012, has exceeded its goal of restoring 40,000 acres of forest for parkgoers to enjoy.

Specifically, collaborative partners have worked together to remove understory fuels to decrease wildfire risk, restore shortleaf pines, and increase wildlife openings, while improving areas for deer and other wildlife to forage.

These combined efforts of the Grandfather Ranger District and collaborative partners have yielded fantastic results for our community and our forests.

I know that these efforts will benefit generations of outdoor enthusiasts and conservationists for years to come. I salute the Grandfather Ranger District and the many partners who earn the Restored and Resilient Landscapes Award.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. YODER) at noon.

## PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Lord, You are powerful and strong, yet You bend to Your people and show them mercy and sustaining grace.

Help the leaders of our Nation make wise decisions in our day. May they look to You for guidance every step of the way until we stand in Your light forever. Set us all on a path that will lead to peace and security.

Bless us this day and every day, and may all that is done within the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

## THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. LAWRENCE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

## URGING PRESIDENT TO NOMINATE A SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSIONER

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly urge President Trump to nominate a Social Security Commissioner without further delay.

The Social Security Administration has been without a Senate-confirmed Commissioner for over 1,700 days. That is almost 5 years. This is totally unacceptable. The American people need a Commissioner, and they need one now.

Without a Commissioner, Social Security is just spinning its wheels. Important decisions are being put off and service has deteriorated.

I ask the President to act now to nominate a Commissioner so that Social Security can provide the service Americans want, need, and deserve.

## COMMEMORATING FORMER PERRIS MAYOR DARYL BUSCH

(Mr. TAKANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Daryl Busch, the former mayor of Perris, California, who passed away earlier this month.

As a U.S. Navy veteran, a small-business owner, and a pillar of the Perris community, Mayor Busch's commitment to public service was never in doubt. His professionalism, class, and compassion are just a few of the many reasons he was elected mayor of Perris for six consecutive terms.

During his tenure, the city emerged from serious financial challenges to become a stable and growing community, and his leadership was critical to completing the Metrolink extension, which now connects Perris to neighboring communities. The foundation he built during his 17 years of public service will benefit the city and its residents for years to come.

My thoughts are with Kay, his wife of 57 years, their son, Barry, and the rest of the Busch family.

## KEEPING OUR CHILDREN INSURED

(Mr. YODER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of helping children who, through no fault of their own, have no health insurance. These are children who are ineligible for Medicaid, and their family cannot afford private insurance. CHIP, or Children's Health Insurance Program, helps these children receive coverage.

In Kansas, more than 79,000 vulnerable children are enrolled in CHIP. That is why I have worked to preserve and strengthen it during my time in Congress.

Last month, I voted for reauthorizing CHIP for 5 more years, through 2022. This invaluable benefit to kids in Kansas and across the country was included as part of a bipartisan bill called the CHAMPIONING HEALTHY KIDS Act, which passed the House last month and now awaits further action in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the Senate will act quickly to pass this bill and reauthorize the important CHIP program to ensure that families and children who rely on this program remain covered.

## GOP TAX BILL INCENTIVES: AUTOMATION OVER JOB CREATION

(Mrs. LAWRENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address my concerns with the GOP tax bill.

Calling this bill the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is simply wrong.

Adding $1.5 trillion to our deficit and assuming—and basically hoping—corporations will create jobs is irresponsible. There is no guarantee jobs will be created and no incentive for job training. This is wrong.

In America, we have a skilled trade crisis. We cannot continue to operate our economy and jobs without skilled trades. We must give incentives to invest in new technology and equipment for our corporations, but we must do that while demanding that they also invest in skilled trade training and investment.

Tax reform was a real chance to close the skills gap, reinvest in our workers, and create a 21st century job training program.

## IMPORTANCE OF TAX REFORM

(Mr. MITCHELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to emphasize the importance of the reductions and reforms reflected in H.R. 1, which the conference committee will work on today.

People in my district and across America await meaningful tax reform. Most Americans paid too much in taxes. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported last year that Americans paid more money in taxes than they spent on food and clothing. It is no wonder that nearly 60 percent of Americans believe our current Tax Code is unfair—it is.

America's Tax Code is currently chock full of special interest deals, while families living paycheck to paycheck and job creators need lower and simpler taxes now.

Throughout this process, my approach has been to evaluate this tax legislation from one question: Will this improve the lives of the vast majority of the people in my district?

That answer is, absolutely, yes.

The Tax Foundation projects that the House plan will save the average family in Michigan about $2,200 a year. That is real money.

Americans deserve to keep more of what they earn. I look forward to reviewing the conference report and finalizing the tax reduction package that will provide relief to all Americans.

## LET'S VOTE NOW

(Mr. SCHRADER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge House Republicans to put aside partisan politics and pass the Dream Act.

This fall, I have shared story after story from the House floor of young Oregonians who have benefited from DACA. Sitting at this desk behind me is a discharge petition which will bring a vote on the Dream Act now.

Unfortunately, this will require 24 of my Republican colleagues to join us in support. As of today, we only have two. This is despite the fact, if leadership put that bill on the floor, it would have overwhelming bipartisan support. We must act on this.

It is clear that the administration is, at best, problematic. When asked about the status of DACA, this President said: They shouldn't be very worried; I have got a big heart. But it was only a few short months later that he announced an end to the DACA program.

The Dream Act must be passed by Christmas. We should do it today. Continuing to delay a vote on the Dream Act basically puts 800,000 recipients at risk, is irresponsible, and puts those lives in limbo.

These young folks are doctors and teachers. The path forward is foggy, at best, right now. They deserve a better future. Let's vote now.

## RECOGNIZING 2017 CONGRESSIONAL APP CHALLENGE WINNERS

(Mr. NEWHOUSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize three high school students from Kennewick, Washington, as the winners of Washington's Fourth District 2017 Congressional App Challenge.

Seth Florman, Damon Fuller, and Kyler Zimmerman spent many hours creating and refining an app they named Powerhouse, which enables the user to take on the role of businessowner of an energy company. These students designed the app to illustrate an energy company's responsibilities to the community and to draw attention to the challenges energy providers face.

Thank you to our panel of judges and to the engineers at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory who will be providing the winners with a tour of their great facility.

The Congressional App Challenge highlights the value of computer

science and coding, and I am proud to represent central Washington, where schools and teachers are dedicated to encouraging students to excel in STEM education.

This year, the Fourth Congressional District's App Challenge had the highest number of entries since my office began participating in the contest, which is a testament to the creativity of our young people.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Seth, Damon, and Kyler on their wining app, Powerhouse, and I look forward to their continued educational and professional success.

## RECOGNIZING ORANGE COUNTY CIF CHAMPIONS

(Mr. CORREA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize not one, not two, but three championship high school football teams in my district.

Anaheim's own Katella High School varsity football team won their first ever CIF Division 11 championship victory. On December 1, the Katella Knights varsity football team brought a championship title to their school for the first time in the school's history.

On December 2, Orange High School, another public school in my district, brought home the Division 13 CIF title.

Also on December 2, Mater Dei High School's varsity football team won their first CIF Southern Section Division 1 title since 1999.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating these fine athletes, their coaches, and their outstanding football programs.

I must say congratulations to the Knights, Panthers, and Monarchs. All three teams will be playing for their State titles in their respective divisions this Saturday.

## RECOGNIZING NICKLAUS CHILDREN'S NEW OUTPATIENT CENTER IN PINECREST

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami on the opening of its new Sports Health and Urgent Care Center.

With this new center, Nicklaus continues its proud tradition as one of the leading pediatric institutions in the Nation. Located in my congressional district, just down the street from my home in Pinecrest, this center will provide injury prevention and performance training programs, as well as rapid care, to our young athletes through the cutting-edge therapy services found at Nicklaus Children's Hospital. It will also serve as a resource to families to take their young children, sadly, in times of medical emergencies.

For decades, Nicklaus Children's Hospital has inspired hope and promoted lifelong health in south Florida by providing the best care to kids in our community. It prides itself in bettering south Florida one patient at a time.

So I invite everyone to come out and meet the staff of the new Nicklaus Sports Health and Urgent Care Center this Friday, December 15, at the Suniland Shopping Center in Pinecrest from 9 to 11 a.m.

## HONORING MAYOR VI LYLES

(Ms. ADAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mayor Vi Lyles, who recently made history as the first African-American woman elected mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina.

A selfless and devoted public servant, Lyles' journey began in a deeply segregated South, requiring her to overcome numerous obstacles. After more than three decades in public service, she retired from the city of Charlotte and was then elected to serve two consecutive terms as a member of the Charlotte City Council, rising to mayor pro tem. Her leadership helped mold our city into one of the fastest growing cities in America and a beacon of the South.

Mayor Lyles, mother and grandmother, is one of my sheroes and a role model to many. Like strong African-American leaders who came before her, like Shirley Chisholm and Fannie Lou Hamer, Lyles' election shattered yet another glass ceiling.

As the 59th mayor of Charlotte, the story of Vi Lyles will be an inspiration to young girls and boys and women throughout North Carolina and the Nation for generations to come.

Join me in welcoming and congratulating our new mayor, Mayor Vi Lyles. I look forward to our continued partnership to move Charlotte forward.

□ 1215

## STOP THE BLEED

(Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to help raise awareness for the Stop the Bleed training course.

Recently, I had the opportunity to take this course, offered by the American College of Surgeons. This simple training teaches you how to treat bleeding injuries and help save a life. The most common preventable cause of death after an accident is losing too much blood after trained responders arrive.

This past June, I saw the difference having these lifesaving skills can make when several of my colleagues and friends were shot while we were practicing for the Congressional Baseball Game.

We were fortunate to have the skills of former Army medic, my colleague, Congressman BRAD WENSTRUP, who was able to apply a tourniquet to Majority Whip STEVE SCALISE and help save STEVE's life.

Each year, more than 180,000 people die from injuries sustained from car crashes, falls, industrial and farm accidents, shootings, and natural disasters. Every American could potentially save a life by learning these very simple skills.

I commend this campaign and I hope by raising awareness we will equip more Americans to do just that.

## GUN VIOLENCE

(Mr. EVANS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about something truly heartbreaking. Three years ago, 20 children and 6 adults were ruthlessly gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

Since then, no meaningful gun legislation has been passed in this Congress, in spite of widespread public support for commonsense gun reform.

And guess what. We had another fatal shooting in Las Vegas, where almost 60 people were gunned down. And there was another one in Texas, where churchgoers were shot down while praying.

In the last 4 years, two Members have been shot. Talk about hitting close to home.

According to the CDC, on average, 93 Americans are killed with guns every day in our country. This is simply unacceptable. Our Nation also has the highest homicide by firearm rate among the world's most developed nations.

In October 2017, there were over 232 homicides in Philadelphia, meaning that the homicide rate was 8 percent higher than during the same time last year. The city of Philadelphia knows all too well the lives lost at the hands of gun violence.

Promoting public safety and making our neighborhoods stronger and safer block by block is something I will continue to fight for.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are tired of excuses and inactions. This is truly a matter of life and death. We need to look out for our Nation's future and we need to stop this block by block.

## QUESTIONS SURROUNDING OCTOBER AMBUSH IN NIGER

(Ms. WILSON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind Congress and the Nation that there are still many questions surrounding the October ambush

in Niger during which my constituent, Sergeant La David Johnson and three members of his unit were killed by Islamist militants.

This week, two news organizations reported disturbing details that raise questions about the true nature of the unit's mission in Niger. There also is a question of who exactly was making the decisions on that fateful night: Was it the soldiers or their commanders back at base?

According to one report, after being separated from the unit for 48 hours, Africa Command believed that Sergeant Johnson was still alive and may have been captured, tortured, and executed.

The true story of what happened to Sergeant Johnson may be, in the end, a source of embarrassment for the Pentagon and this Nation, but the agency owes his family and the American people the truth, however ugly it may be.

Mr. Speaker, I am committed to keeping this issue on the front burner and in everyone's mind until we know what happened to Sergeant La David Johnson.

## RELATING TO SELECTION OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON INVESTIGATIVE SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). Without objection, the Speaker or a designee and the minority leader or a designee shall each name a total of 15 Members, Delegates, or the Resident Commissioner from the respective party of such individual who are not members of the Committee on Ethics to be available to serve on investigative subcommittees of that committee during the 115th Congress, pursuant to clause 5(a)(4) of rule X.

There was no objection.

## APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO BE AVAILABLE TO SERVE ON INVESTIGATIVE SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to clause 5(a)(4)(A) of rule X, and the order of the House of today, of the following Members of the House to be available to serve on investigative subcommittees of the Committee on Ethics for the 115th Congress:

Mrs. WAGNER, Missouri
Mrs. WALORSKI, Indiana
Mrs. HANDEL, Georgia
Mrs. MIMI WALTERS, California
Mr. PAULSEN, Minnesota

## COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

DECEMBER 13, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
*Speaker of the House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the order of December 13, 2017, and clause (5)(a)(4)(A) of Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I designate the following Members to be available to serve as members of an Investigative Subcommittee established by the Committee on Ethics during the 115th Congress:

Representative Joaquin Castro of Texas
Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington
Representative A. Donald McEachin of Virginia
Representative Norma J. Torres of California
Representative Niki Tsongas of Massachusetts

Best Regards,

NANCY PELOSI,
*Democratic Leader.*

## PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2396, PRIVACY NOTIFICATION TECHNICAL CLARIFICATION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4015, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REFORM AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2017

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 658 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 658

*Resolved*, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1638) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-47. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4324) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-48 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; (2) the further amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the underlying legislation.

This rule provides for consideration of two bills dealing with Iran and its continued support of international terrorism. In addition, the rule makes in order all submitted amendments.

These bills were the subject of hearings in the Financial Services Committee and were marked up and reported favorably to the House. Both

bills received bipartisan support in the committee, and I would expect that we will see significant bipartisan support on the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that Iran's leaders have a threat to our way of life. We don't have to look any further than Iranian support for lethal attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, particularly through IEDs, to witness Iran's hostility toward us. Going back several decades, Iran has routinely terrorized the Middle East and has sought to export terror worldwide.

Iran's numerous threats to annihilate our friend and ally, Israel, are a steady drumbeat that should continuously remind us of Iran's threat.

In 2001, the Ayatollah Khamenei is quoted as saying: ''It is the mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to erase Israel from the map of the region.''

In 2002, a leader of Hezbollah, which is a known extension of the Iranian regime, said: ''If Jews all gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide.''

But lest we think these are the views of the past, the Ayatollah was quoted in 2014 saying that ''this . . . regime of Israel . . . has no cure but to be annihilated.''

And we could go on. The evidence of Iran's intent on the destruction of Israel is nearly endless. Just yesterday, the commander of Iran's revolutionary guards offered to support Palestinians if they choose to stage an armed uprising to take by force Israel's newly recognized capital: Jerusalem.

Any country whose leaders actively support terrorism against Israel and whose leaders take an official position that the nation of Israel should be eliminated from the Earth are, and always must be, a sworn enemy of the United States.

But it is not just Israel. Other Middle Eastern allies in the United States have been the target of Iran's hostility as well. Namely, Saudi Arabia has been increasingly threatened by the Iranian regime.

In 2011, our FBI and DEA agents successfully disrupted a plot by Iran to assassinate the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the U.S. here in Washington, D.C. The uncovered plot included bombing a restaurant in D.C. at which the Saudi Arabian Ambassador was planning to eat. The bombing would almost certainly have killed innocent Americans as well.

The list could go on.

Iran has fomented unrest in Iraq, has sought to subject Sunni Muslims to Shiite militias, has supplied the Syrian regime in its years-long civil war, has supported Hezbollah and Hamas, has flagrantly disregarded international law by building a nuclear program, and has taunted the United States.

□ 1230

Who can forget the image of U.S. Navy sailors, hands behind their heads, forced to kneel under gunpoint on an Iranian military vessel? Or the thinly veiled attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq using proxy militant groups? Or the numerous incidents in the Persian Gulf involving harassment of the U.S. Navy?

Yet, against this backdrop, the United States entered into an agreement with Iran. The agreement, commonly referred to as the ''Iran deal,'' was opposed by a bipartisan majority in the House. It relaxed sanctions on Iran, opened channels for business investment, and allowed Iran a pathway forward on a nuclear bomb.

Further, while having the impact of a treaty between two nations, the Obama administration chose to call the agreement by another name and, in so doing, bypassed the United States Senate. This political commitment by President Obama to Iran is the reason for these two bills today.

The first bill, H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, targets the finances of Iran's ruling class. Its goal is threefold: One, aid U.S. authorities in their efforts to eliminate money laundering by the Iranian regime; two, expose the sectors of the Iranian economy that are controlled by Iran's rulers; and three, show the Iranian people how their corrupt government accumulates wealth for itself at the expense of the people.

The Iran deal removes sanctions on many of the known corrupt government entities. This bill will provide the transparency necessary to reveal the level of corruption within Iran and to inform Congress and others about how to combat the flow of money to terrorists. It further exposes the ruling class by publishing this information in the most common languages spoken within Iran.

The second bill that will be considered under this rule is H.R. 4324, the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act. This bill will instruct the Treasury Department to report on transactions of financial institutions related to the export of aircraft to Iran.

Under the Iran deal, President Obama removed restrictions on the sale of American aircraft to Iran. In 2016, the Treasury Department authorized the export of more than 200 aircraft to Iran Air, Iran's state-owned air carrier. Yet we know that Iran Air has been the transporter of choice for Iran's revolutionary guards as they have ferried weapons systems around the Middle East.

The absurdity of this deal to increase the revolutionary guards' capacity to move weapons is self-evident. The bill before us today will require certification by financiers of the aircraft exportation deals that none of the aircraft exported will be used for terrorism or Iran's weapons of mass destruction program.

Due to Iran Air's continued role in transporting materials used for terrorism, this is one step that we should take to help hold lending institutions accountable for their support of aircraft exports to Iran.

Mr. Speaker, many of us in Congress know how bad the Iran deal was for our security and our allies' security. That is why there was bipartisan opposition to the deal last Congress. While in the end we were unsuccessful in prevailing upon the administration to abandon its bad idea, we should continue to stand in the gap against Iran's ongoing efforts to undermine peace in the Middle East and destroy our friends and, ultimately, the United States.

Today, we have two bills that will help our ongoing efforts to thwart Iran's terrorist ambitions. I urge my colleagues to support this rule and these bills.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK), for yielding me the customary 30 minutes of debate. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, when the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action came before Congress, I made my objections very clear. I believed then, as I do now, that the Iran deal too quickly removed the sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table in the first place, allowing Iran to remain a nuclear threshold state.

However, like it or not, the JCPOA is now law, and it will be wrong to undermine it for purely political reasons. Unfortunately, that is, in my opinion, what my Republican colleagues are doing here today. This is not the way to handle our country's foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, the most important question that you need to ask yourself at this time does not have to do with the substance of the legislation this rule provides for, but, rather, why on Earth this body is wasting what precious legislative time remains to bring these bills to the floor today.

The checklist of important items that need to be addressed is long and time is short. Thanks to the inability of my Republican colleagues to govern, even within their own conference, we face the specter of yet another government shutdown next week. The Band-Aid that Republicans came up with last week to provide funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, which insures some 9 million children, expires at the end of the year. Utah, Colorado, Arizona, California, Ohio, Minnesota, the District of Columbia, and Oregon are just some of the States that have had to inform families that CHIP funding is nearing its end.

Why is this? Historically, the Children's Health Insurance Program funding has been a largely bipartisan effort. And why shouldn't it be? We are simply talking about helping to cover roughly 9 million low-income children and pregnant women.

It has been over 2 months since CHIP's authorization lapsed, and it is far past time for a sensible solution to this problem. Does today's legislation solve this issue? No, it does not.

We also have 800,000-plus DREAMers waiting for word from this Republican-

controlled Congress. Will my friends across the aisle allow these fine young people to remain in the only country they have ever known as home? Will you let those DREAMers who have served this country bravely stay in this country so that they may start their own families here in the United States, start their own businesses, and go to college?

The idea that my friends would drag their feet on such an issue, let alone actually allow DREAMers to be deported, is anathema to what this country stands for, and it will darken the beacon this country has been for millions of people since our founding: a place where those of differing backgrounds but dedicated to freedom and the rule of law come and make a life for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans control the House; they control the Senate; they control the White House; and what has that control translated into for the American people? Absolutely nothing at this point. In fact, it is looking increasingly more like the first year of a unified Republican government in over a decade will end with nothing getting done.

In an attempt to distract from their failures, Republicans have taken to blaming, and I quote them, ''obstructionist Democrats.'' They point to this side of the aisle as the cause of their governing woes. That is a neat trick, but the American people are not going to fall for it, and I think you saw that last night in Alabama where new stars fell on Alabama.

It wasn't the Democrats who tried to take healthcare away from 32 million people. It was Republicans. Thank goodness they failed. It is not the Democrats who are trying to give the wealthy and rich corporations a tax break on the backs of hardworking Americans. It is the Republicans. I hope this equally misguided effort likewise fails.

I have some advice for my Republican friends. If, like this side of the aisle, you spent more time working on policies that help the American people instead of the wealthy and rich corporations that are doing just fine, you would likely see more legislative success.

Democrats remain ready to work in a bipartisan way to accomplish all that remains left to do this year. We are ready to fund the government and provide for smart investments for the future of our country. We are ready to pull the hundreds of thousands of DREAMers out of unnecessary limbo and provide them with the status they deserve. We are ready to provide the funding and authorization needed to give millions of low-income children the health insurance they need.

The list goes on and on. But, Mr. Speaker, if Republicans continue to not even allow Democrats in the room to address these issues and if they continue to burn legislative time on the bills we have before us today, then it won't be just the Republican majority that pays the price. It will be the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, we have two witnesses on their way. We started a little bit early. I reserve the balance of time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am expecting another speaker. If we defeat the previous question, I am going to offer an amendment to the rule to bring up the bipartisan bicameral bill H.R. 3440, the Dream Act.

Just last week, a group of 34 of my Republican colleagues sent a letter to Speaker RYAN urging a vote before the year's end on legislation that would protect the DACA recipients. This means, if we defeat the previous question and bring up the Dream Act, the bill would garner enough bipartisan support to pass the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I ask how much longer will this body be complicit in the Trump administration's assault on DREAMers? It is time we listen to the vast majority of Americans and this body and act to protect these courageous young people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, when my speaker arrives, I will allow Mrs. TORRES to discuss this matter further. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, at this point, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, continuing, we are faced, as I said earlier, with another government shutdown. The National Flood Insurance Program, which is particularly critical to those of us in coastal States, is set to expire. The Republican Band-Aid to keep the Children's Health Insurance Program funded will run out, leaving millions of children without the healthcare they need.

The authorization of an important intelligence tool to keep this country safe is set to expire, and millions of Americans in California, Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands desperately wait to find out if they will receive the resources they need to recover from the devastating hurricanes and the wildfires that we have seen this year and that are continuing in California.

I have said repeatedly that FEMA is not only dealing with hurricanes and floods, they are dealing with tornadoes and with all sorts of matters, and the wildfires manifestly have kept them occupied over the course of time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES), my good friend, as I previously noted, to discuss the proposal that I spoke of with reference to the DREAMers.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, it has been 2 weeks since I last stood here to ask the House to bring the Dream Act to a vote. Thirty-four of my colleagues, my Republican colleagues, have sent a letter to Republican Speaker RYAN asking for action to protect DREAMers before the holidays because they understand the urgency.

What are we waiting for? Republicans continue to state that we have until March to resolve this issue, but that is simply not true. 122 DREAMers lose protection every single day.

□ 1245

That means that 122 intelligent, hardworking Americans, by every right except birth, are losing their ability to continue their education, to work and contribute to our economy.

Are we willing to stop the deportations of hundreds of thousands of young DREAMers or not?

This is not a partisan question. This is the question of who we are as Americans. Let's put an end to the fear and uncertainty that DREAMers have been living with these past few months.

We have been clear. This Congress must not finish this year without providing a permanent fix for DREAMers, their families, and the communities that depend on them. It is unconscionable. This is not who we are.

Mr. Speaker, many of my Republican colleagues support action on the Dream Act before the holidays. Many have said so publicly. The majority of Americans want us to act now.

Mr. Speaker, 1,708 DACA recipients have lost their status since I last stood here 2 weeks ago. This isn't hard. The fix is right in front of us. It has been here all along.

We all know that the votes are here today, if this body only had the courage to act. And I know that the Dream Act would pass today if we only allowed it.

I ask my colleagues to vote against the previous question so that we can immediately begin to bring the Dream Act and act on the floor today.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the former chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from Colorado (Mr. BUCK) for the time.

I want to thank Chairman HENSARLING because these bills that we are combining today came out of his committee. I want to thank him for his leadership in bringing these important bills before us today.

I rise in support of H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act. I want to thank my good friend from Maine, BRUCE POLIQUIN, for his

work in authoring this bill. It is a critical step, a necessary step in holding the Iranian regime accountable for its money laundering, for its terror financing, and other wide-ranging criminal activities.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, known by its initials, its acronym, IRGC, has long been at the heart of the Iranian criminal enterprise, controlling the better part of Iran's economy in key sectors like oil, gas, telecommunications, and transportation.

The IRGC's business empire and monopoly of these economic sectors provides the regime with billions of dollars that it uses to do what? To feed the people, to clothe the people, to educate the children?

No. To repress the Iranian people and to export the terror that it has done so much damage in throughout the world, and its hateful ideology abroad.

Two years ago, I held a hearing of our Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, where we explored the role of the IRGC and, again, that is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. We looked at the role of the IRGC in Iran's economy and we raised these very concerns, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to thank Chairman HENSARLING for his leadership on this issue and his consistent efforts to hold Iran accountable, because that is what we are trying to do, hold these terrorists accountable.

This is one of the many issues where the Financial Services and the Foreign Affairs Committees have done a great job of working together to implement targeted sanctions against the Iranian regime for its illicit activity.

For years, our Treasury Department has been working to identify and to sanction IRGC leaders. They have shell companies. We have been looking at what these shell companies are. Let's identify and let's sanction them. Their proxies. Let's designate and warn foreign companies about the risk of doing business with the IRGC's connected entities. As fast as the IRGC can create new ones, we shut them down, new ones pop up.

Unfortunately, the misguided JCPOA has made the Treasury's job even harder, with the IRGC collecting billions from their financial windfall created by new outside investments in the very sectors previously targeted by our sanctions.

So it is important now more than ever that the Treasury publicizes the assets controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the rest of Iran's corrupt leadership for two reasons, Mr. Speaker.

First, so that the long-suffering people of Iran, with whom we have no problem—we want to help the people of Iran so that these people have a window into the regime's pervasive theft and corruption that deprives them of the most basic of commodities.

Second, so that businesses stop funneling cash into these criminal enterprises that are financing terror throughout the world.

This bill will help shine a necessary light on these nefarious actions of Iran both inside and outside of the country, and I urge its swift passage.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I would advise my good friend that I have no further speakers and I will be prepared to close when he is prepared.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I have two more speakers. I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN), a member of the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Illicit Finance.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, I speak today and rise in support of the rule for H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman HENSARLING also for moving this very important bipartisan piece of legislation through the House Financial Services Committee.

Additionally, I want to thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who supported my bill last year. Unfortunately, it got stuck in the Senate, so we are doing it over again this year in the House.

Mr. Speaker, the primary responsibility of every Member of Congress is to help keep our families safe. Embedded with that promise is to support and defend our Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, moms and dads in Maine and across America are increasingly alarmed by the frequency of terrorist attacks here at home, with another attempted attack 2 days ago in New York City.

Mr. Speaker, today, there are 1,000 ongoing investigations of terrorist activity by the FBI in all 50 States.

Mr. Speaker, that is why H.R. 1638 is so important. It is a commonsense bill that will help keep our families safe and free. In doing so, we should never make this a political issue.

Mr. Speaker, the Iranian Government is one of the chief sponsors of terrorism and instability throughout the world. Their senior political and military leaders and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps train, arm, and fund terrorist organizations around the world. They have become experts at using the internet and social media to radicalize, to recruit, and to direct terrorist attacks around the globe, including here in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, the Iranian Government has American blood on its hands.

Now, there are approximately 70 to 80 top political and military leaders in Iran that control about one-third of its entire economy. They use their power to corrupt the telecommunications, the construction, and other important industries in that country.

A recent investigation by Reuters found that the Supreme Leader in Iran alone has accumulated tremendous personal wealth through a foundation claiming to help the poor. So while the corruption has grown, the average Iranian citizen earns the equivalent of $15,000 per year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Maine.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Iran and the people of the world should know how much wealth has been accumulated by these chief sponsors of terrorism and what the money is being used for.

Companies across the globe looking to possibly do business with Iran should also understand what they are dealing with before they invest.

That is why my Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act is a straightforward, main, commonsense bill. It simply requires the U.S. Treasury Department to collect, to maintain, and to post online the list of these 70 or 80 senior political and military leaders in Iran, their personal assets, and how that money was acquired and what it is being used for.

My bill requires the Treasury Department to post this information on their website in English as well as the three major languages that are used and spoken, rather, in Iran: Farsi, Arabic, and Azeri. The information should be available, easily downloaded, and shared by everyone who wants to see this.

Mr. Speaker, I might also add that this information comes from publicly available sources. It is not classified information.

Now, I have heard folks say: Well, this is not a good idea to expose the Iranian Government's corruption in their funding of terrorism, because, if you do, we might not be able to work with these people.

Are you kidding me?

These are the radicals who regularly chant ''Death to America.'' It doesn't make sense to hope that they will abandon their support for terrorism by not shedding light on their corruption. Mr. Speaker, hope is not a national security strategy.

My bill helps make sure Congress gets its priorities straight when it comes to this issue. Protecting American families here at home and helping to safeguard our troops overseas, where they are fighting for our freedom, is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, so let's use one click of a computer from any corner of the globe to help expose the illicit activities of the chief sponsor of terrorism in this world. Secrecy and corruption breed more terrorism by governments like those in Iran.

Let us stand up, Mr. Speaker, for every peace-loving nation around this world, and let's stand up to protect our families here at home.

Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate the time and the consideration. Please vote ''yes'' for H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I would just ask, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado has 13½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Florida has 17½ minutes remaining.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS), the vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to come to the floor this afternoon to support House Resolution 658, the combined rule providing for consideration of H.R. 1638 and H.R. 4324.

H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, sponsored by the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN), is commonsense legislation. The bill would publicize assets associated with Iran's Government and military leadership. It would require a report to Congress on the assets that these leaders control, how they were acquired, and how each and every one of these Iranian leaders uses them.

The American people, the American businesses, and the international community deserve to know who controls money and assets in Iran.

I am also proud to be the sponsor of H.R. 4324, the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act. My legislation would improve congressional oversight of any financing that the Treasury authorizes for aircraft sales to Iran.

Every 6 months, the Treasury would need to certify to us that finance authorizations would not benefit an Iranian person who is transporting items for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nor providing transportation for sanctioned entities.

□ 1300

Treasury would also have to certify to us that these authorizations don't pose a significant money laundering or terrorism finance risk to the U.S. financial system.

If the Treasury Department cannot make this certification, the Department must tell us why, and it must explain to Congress the course of action it intends to take.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this rule, and I urge them to support H.R. 1638 and H.R. 4324.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as we approach the end of 2017, and with just a few legislative days left, the Republican majority is focusing on the wrong things. Plain and simple, the bills before us today are more evidence of that.

Over the next couple of weeks, we face a terrifyingly long to-do list, the outcome of which will affect every single American.

Let me be very clear. My friend from Maine and my friend from Texas, my friend from Maine, especially, passionately put forward significant matters having to do with Iran. My recollection is that I, for one, as did many members of the Democratic Party, voted for the transparency that he calls for and are likely to do so again.

While this is an important matter, it is not nearly as critical at this time that we be occupying this kind of legislative time. The simple fact of the matter is we could have put this on the suspension calendar and not been exercising ourselves in the Rules Committee, occupying legislative time that could be addressing the Flood Insurance Program, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and intelligence tools that keep this country safe that are about to expire.

We could have been addressing the hurricane relief for Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and southwest Louisiana.

We could have been addressing the fires in California, Oregon, Montana, and other areas of the country.

We could have been addressing the flood in Texas that devastated portions of that area, as well as, during that same period of time, we had tornadoes and other issues indicating how critical it is that we support these matters.

We could have been dealing with a real infrastructure measure. Everybody in this country knows that our roads and bridges are in despicable shape at this point, and it is not as if we do not have the ability to do something about it. We don't have the political will.

So we are wasting legislative time here today with these daunting tasks before us, and this is what the Republican majority chooses to focus on: trying to pass a tax bill, for example, that gives most of the benefits to the wealthy and rich corporations while adding over more than $1 trillion to the deficit.

I have said before: Look out. When we finish whatever this tax bill is—and now it is being called what it is, a tax cut and not tax reform that is needed in this country. When we finish with that, the next words out of many of my colleagues' mouths next year are going to be, ''We need to address the entitlements,'' meaning Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid. I can assure you that that is what we will hear from my former deficit hawk friends who are now in charge of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican friends, for the sake of the American people, to abandon this reckless tact and return to regular order. That is something that we are not doing and have not done. We have had more closed rules in this session of Congress than in the history of the United States Congress.

They need to work with Democrats in a bipartisan way. I think Alabama told us that last night, and I hope that that message is pervasive and allows for us in this body, as well as in the other body, to understand the importance of everybody, all of these brilliant people that Americans sent here to work, to work together to solve many of the issues of this country and address its needs in a meaningful way, not the needs of the wealthy few. Given everything there is to do, anything less is abdication of our duty as legislators.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, as my family and I sit around the dinner table, my wife, Perry, and my two children, we talk politics, not surprisingly, and there are times where we distinguish good from bad, and we know that Iran is an enemy of the good in this world. It terrorizes the Middle East. It seeks to eliminate Israel. It pursues the destruction of the United States. And yet, for some reason, the prior administration struck a deal with the Iranian regime, the same regime that has American blood on its hands. The two bills before us today begin the difficult work of once again ensuring Iran is stopped in its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and in its support of terrorism.

I thank Chairman HENSARLING for bringing these bills forward and for my colleagues from the Financial Services Committee who have joined me on the floor today to make the case for this effort. I thank Chairman SESSIONS for his leadership on the Rules Committee and for providing the debate on this issue today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the rule, supporting the underlying bills, and putting pressure on Iran to abandon terror and embrace peace.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 658 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3440) to authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of status of certain individuals who are long-term United States residents and who entered the United States as children and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 4. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 3440.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R–Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1320

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING) at 1 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 658; and

Adopting House Resolution 658, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The second electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

## PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1638, IRANIAN LEADERSHIP ASSET TRANSPARENCY ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4324, STRENGTHENING OVERSIGHT OF IRAN'S ACCESS TO FINANCE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 658) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1638) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4324) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 229, nays 189, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 676]

YEAS—229

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—189

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist

Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Black
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Harris
Johnson (OH)
Kennedy
Noem
Pocan
Sensenbrenner
Stefanik
Visclosky
Walz
Young (AK)

□ 1349

Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. COHEN, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. PAULSEN and MOONEY of West Virginia changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I was speaking with constituents and unintentionally missed the vote on rollcall 676, the Previous Question on H. Res. 658. Had I been present, I would have voted "Yea" on rollcall No. 676.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained to cast my vote in time. Had I been present, I would have voted "Yea" on rollcall No. 676.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 238, noes 182, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 677]

AYES—238

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—182

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—11

Bridenstine
Farenthold
Harris
Hastings
Johnson (OH)
Kennedy
Pocan
Rice (SC)
Sensenbrenner
Visclosky
Walz

□ 1357

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2396, PRIVACY NOTIFICATION TECHNICAL CLARIFICATION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4015, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REFORM AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2017

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 657 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 657

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2396) to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to update the exception for certain annual notices provided

by financial institutions. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; (2) the further amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be in order without intervention of any point of order, shall be considered as read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question; and (3) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4015) to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. An amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-46 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity, over the last couple of weeks, to bring a number of bills from the Financial Services Committee to the floor. We talk so much about regular order and having a process where the committees are doing their work, where the authorizers are deep into the details, and then we are bringing those bills to the floor for the entire House to vote on. We have that opportunity again today.

Mr. Speaker, the rule today brings two bills to the floor: H.R. 2396, which is the Privacy Notification Technical Clarification Act, it brings that under a structured rule, making in order the only amendment that was offered, a bipartisan amendment, offered by Mr. CLAY and Mr. TROTT; and it also brings H.R. 4015 to the floor, Mr. Speaker, which is the Corporate Governance Reform and Transparency Act of 2017. We did not have any germane amendments offered to that measure in the Rules Committee last night, so we bring that under a closed rule today.

Mr. Speaker, I remind my colleagues—as is the way of my chairman on the Rules Committee—notice was sent out to all Members, and will continue to be sent out to all Members, for each set of bills that we consider in the Rules Committee soliciting any amendments or ideas that folks may have. We sent out that notification, but, for these two bills, we received only one germane amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I won't go into great detail about these individual bills because we are fortunate to have the sponsors here on the floor for the rule today. But what I do want to say is that this is another series in a line of commonsense, authorizing pieces of legislation, things that move through committee in a bipartisan way, that are going to make life just a little bit easier for the American people.

We have a chance today, if we support this noncontroversial rule, to bring these two noncontroversial bills to the floor and make that difference together, a difference we all came to Washington to make.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to consider supporting this rule as well as supporting the two underlying pieces of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule. This rule that we are looking at today has two bills under it, and this is the 56th closed rule allowing no amendments that we are bringing to the floor this year. Over the past year, we have not considered any legislation under an open rule that would allow Republicans or Democrats to bring forward amendments here on the floor.

When the 115th Congress opened, Speaker RYAN promised regular order bills would make their way to the floor after hearings and markups. Instead, we have seen bill after bill rushed to the floor. Many bills haven't even gone through committee or skipped hearings. That is true for the failed healthcare bill, and it is also true for the tax bill currently in conference, the major bill this Congress.

This tax bill, that somehow we understand there is a ''deal'' on before the conference committee even met, was crafted behind closed doors, and no Member was able to offer their ideas on the House floor. I offered several bipartisan amendments in the Rules Committee, but they were locked out, as were amendments from every other Democrat and Republican that chose to offer amendments.

The tax legislation would explode our debt. It is a giveaway to wealthy corporations and does nothing to help the middle class.

Now, the benefit of having an open process is creating better ideas: having Democrats and Republicans bring forward those ideas, see who can muster a majority of votes here on the floor of the House, and include that in a tax bill. We are a legislature. That is how we are supposed to work.

Instead, a bill was crafted behind closed doors to raise taxes on 78 million Americans and add $1.7 trillion to the debt. When you add to the debt, that is a tax on future Americans. Instead of taxing them today, you are taxing them tomorrow. The tax-and-spend Republican Party continues to add to the deficit and add to the debt day after day after day.

Mr. Speaker, we only have a few legislative days left before the end of the year, and we have very important work to do, like reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program and funding the government for the remainder of the fiscal year.

There are millions of Americans who have been negatively affected by devastating hurricanes and wildfires in Puerto Rico, Texas, Florida, and the Virgin Islands, and Congress has not stepped up to the plate.

There are also over 800,000 aspiring Americans who are at risk of being deported from the only country they have ever known as home because of the reckless actions of President Trump. Congress needs to act to find a real solution so DREAMers can continue to work legally in the communities that they live in, and they continue to thrive and give back to make our country even greater.

We have a lot of critical tasks ahead, which is why I am really surprised, with all of this work to do, and only 7 or 8 days to do it, that here we are considering two bills where we will have our debate, but they are not bills of great importance. We are using our floor time—very limited, 7 days before the end of the year—when we could be debating tax reform and offering amendments, when we could be addressing the needs of the DREAMers, where we could actually be doing something about the deficit, reining in out-of-control wasteful government spending. We are not doing any of that.

We are doing two minor bills that are favors for public companies, or whoever they are. I am happy to talk about them. I am going to do my role in debating them. One I am even fairly supportive of. But they are completely separated from the actual concerns of the American people.

No wonder the approval rating of this institution is under 15 percent, because we continue to debate these minor bills under a closed process, when, this very week, we could have had an open process for tax reform. We could be voting on 10 or 20 amendments a day, passing some and rejecting some. I have no problem if I bring forward some Democratic amendment and it fails. That is the process. That is fair.

But we have bipartisan, commonsense amendments that should be part of tax reform. Representative SCHWEIKERT and I have a bill to provide a de minimis exemption on taxation for use of cryptocurrencies, to allow them to be used for amounts under $600 in everyday purchases and to remove the specter of IRS enforcement.

Let's put it in. Let's have a vote on it. Let's see if a majority of Congress agrees with me. I hope they do. If not, I am a big boy. It is my job. I can go home. But to not even be able to fight for the issues that my constituents have hired me to fight for is not only the frustration I have, and not only the frustration many Republicans have, but it is the frustration the American people have with this institution.

Now, let's get to these bills. Typically, the Financial Services Committee did not hold a hearing on either of these rules. It is a closed rule.

The first one, H.R. 2396, the Privacy Notification Technical Clarification Act, would remove privacy notice requirements for financial institutions to consumers that share or sell a customer's personal information with third parties.

We are all for reducing unnecessary regulations. When I get to the next bill, the Republicans are actually trying to add paperwork and regulations. This one does, but it picks a very poor one to get rid of. It gets rid of privacy notices for financial institutions that tell consumers that they can share or sell their personal information. Of all of the places to cut paperwork, why would you want to cut the one piece that consumers and retail investors actually care about?

Back in September, 143 million Americans had their personal and sensitive information shared widely, as a result of a data breach at Equifax. Congress should be looking at ways to better secure our sensitive information—a cybersecurity bill, better information sharing—instead of actually making it easier for our personal information to be shared more widely and giving you, as the consumer, less ability to find out where it is being shared.

A hearing would be helpful to understand the full effects of this legislation to see what the unintended consequences are. We do know that it would eliminate clear disclosure to consumers about their privacy rights—never a good thing, especially in these times—including a consumer's ability to opt out from having their information sold to certain third parties. We can do better.

The other bill, H.R. 4015, the Corporate Governance Reform and Transparency Act, makes a change to how proxy advisory firms provide information to shareholders. It would require that they make their recommendations available to companies.

This bill is problematic from a number of perspectives. Here is what it does. Proxy advisory firms provide independent advisory services for investors and have fiduciary responsibility to their investors.

Under this legislation, they would actually have to open themselves up to lobbying for companies and add additional paperwork. They would have to register with the SEC, whereas they now don't, before trying to issue vote recommendations or trying to change the corporate board.

Here is who the players are in this fight: On the one hand, you have public companies; on the other, you have investors, which means your pension fund, and mine, Mr. Speaker. It means university endowments. I know you all don't like those, and you are going to tax them soon. It means, perhaps, using an individual investor, through a mutual fund or other vehicle. So investors on one side, public corporations on the other.

But the problem is: it is not the shareholders of the public companies, it is the insular governance and management structure of those organizations. Many of them do need to be shaken up in the name of efficiency.

There are many examples of investor pressure that has been applied to good effect: to meaningful reforms and corporate governance; preventing conflict of interest, making sure that the board oversees the CEO are not just his golfing buddies, and he is on the board, or she is on the board, of their companies, too.

I have generally been on the side of investor empowerment in that: not to the extreme, not to make it impossible to be a CEO on a publicly traded company, to run a publicly traded company. But, if anything, we should make sure that the actual owners of the companies are empowered to make the changes they need to increase efficiency.

□ 1415

This bill goes the wrong way. It adds red tape and paperwork. It adds regulations to investors and prevents them from being able to exert influence in the same way they do today, adding one degree of additional regulation and paperwork to allow them to do the kinds of good governance activities in terms of running competitive fights for boards of directors.

Now, I get that there is another side. There can be a steamy underbelly to investor engagement as well. There are some investors who only care about short-term gains, who try to institute practices or bully management around in a way that is not conducive to long-term value but, rather, just pump-and-dump schemes that they try to make money off of, and I totally get that.

But in general, it is the owners of a company to whom the fiduciary responsibility of the directors and the CEO lie; and we should empower them, for better or for worse, to make the changes to increase the overall productivity of the company.

We should not burden investors with additional red tape, as Republicans are doing, by creating more bureaucracy and paperwork and compliance costs with this bill.

Frankly, I was surprised to see this bill come out of Financial Services Committee because Republicans have been fairly consistent in trying to remove regulations from Dodd-Frank. That has generally been the approach. I supported the removal of some of those unnecessary regulations. Others are important regulations, like this privacy disclosure that I don't think is a good idea.

But here, they are actually adding reporting requirements above and beyond Dodd-Frank. They are out ''Dodd-Franking'' Dodd-Frank. Republicans are saying there is not enough reporting; there is not enough paperwork; there is not enough money going to lawyers and accountants. In Dodd-Frank, we are going to require that they file even more paperwork with the SEC.

I think that is the wrong way to go, Mr. Speaker, and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to resist this effort to burden shareholders who actually own companies with additional costs and paperwork and prevent them from making necessary management improvements to the companies that, at the end of the day, are run for them, not for the benefit of management.

That is why I oppose this bill. Shareholders should have a right to impartial information about the company in which they have invested. We should minimize paperwork where possible. I have been proud to support a number of bipartisan proposals to do that. This bill goes the opposite way.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say sometimes there is a lot of pressure on the Rules Committee. You come down here and you have got some of the most knowledgeable folks on both sides of the issue, on both sides of the Chamber, and you have got to be prepared to refute detail after detail after detail that might confuse folks back home.

It gives me great pleasure today to not have to spend any time refuting anything that my friend just said because the important thing about developing a reputation is that it is just laughable to suggest that Republicans are coming to the floor today to undermine privacy. It is laughable to suggest that Republicans are coming to the floor today to increase paperwork and red tape. And it is not only laughable,

but it is inaccurate to suggest that it is Republicans coming to do this, Mr. Speaker. These are bipartisan bills coming to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. TROTT). His bill passed out of committee 40–20; a huge bipartisan vote coming out of committee. It went through a hearing; it went through a markup; it was everything that makes this institution work properly. I appreciate him for bringing the issue forward to talk about the tremendous bipartisan effort that he has put together.

Mr. TROTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Georgia for yielding and for his hard work on this rule.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule today, which allows for consideration of H.R. 2396, the Privacy Notification Technical Clarification Act.

I would like to begin by thanking Chairman HENSARLING for guiding this bill through committee, and Chairman SESSIONS for his work on bringing this rule to the floor. I also want to thank Mr. CLAY for his very helpful amendment.

One of the reasons I came to Congress was to reduce the regulatory burden in our country so that businesses could have the freedom to grow, thrive, and create jobs for hardworking Americans. This bill is about modernizing one of those outdated regulations that has been a burden to businesses and consumers alike, the privacy notification rules.

Now, a couple of minutes ago, my friend from Colorado gave a very nice speech about DACA, about tax reform, about the public opinion of this institution; but the speech had nothing to do with consideration of this rule today. When he finally got around to talking about the rule, he said we should not allow the rule to move forward because the underlying bill, H.R. 2396, in light of the Equifax scandal, we should not be eliminating privacy notices and allow banks to circumvent those rules because it is going to hurt consumers.

None of this is correct. This bill is a very simple bill. It deals with auto finance companies and it relieves them from the burden of having to send out privacy notices to consumers year after year when the policy hasn't changed. If the auto finance companies change the policy, they have to send out new privacy notices. If a consumer calls up and says, ''I know the policy hasn't change, but I would like to see the rule,'' they can go on the website or they can ask that the policy be mailed to them. This bill in no way harms consumers.

Now, just last year, we passed the bipartisan bill that allowed banks to stop sending privacy notices to consumers if nothing in the policy had changed. This noncontroversial measure passed by voice vote, with Members on both sides of aisle realizing that companies were wasting enormous amounts of paper and money sending out duplicative and unnecessary privacy notices year after year.

The bill achieved its goal. Millions of dollars that would have been spent on paper and postage were instead put back into our local communities. My bill builds on this success and extends the provision to companies lending money to people buying vehicles.

This means that those who extend credit to consumers who buy vehicles from Ford, GM, Harley-Davidson, and other iconic American companies would receive the same benefit as banks, and, more importantly, consumers would no longer be bombarded with a never-ending stream of little print privacy notices and policies that haven't changed.

This is a bipartisan, commonsense measure. I encourage my colleagues to support the rule and allow debate to begin on this legislation.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I include in the RECORD the Republican bill summary from the majority on the Rules Committee for H.R. 4015.

COMMITTEE ON RULES

Pete Sessions, Chairman—December 11, 2017

H.R. 4015—CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REFORM AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2017

Purpose: To improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry.

Background and Legislative History: Each year, public companies hold shareholder meetings at which the company's shareholders vote for the company's directors and on other significant corporate actions that require shareholder approval. As part of this annual process, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) requires public companies to provide their shareholders with a proxy statement before shareholder meetings. A proxy statement includes all important facts about the matters to be voted on at a shareholder meeting, including, for example, information on board of director candidates, director compensation, executive compensation, related party transactions, securities ownership by certain beneficial owners and management, and eligible shareholder proposals. The information contained in the statement must be filed with the SEC before soliciting a shareholder vote on the election of directors and the approval of other corporate actions. Solicitations, whether by management or shareholders, must disclose all important facts about the issues on which shareholders are asked to vote.

In general, state corporate law governs shareholder voting rights, including the types of corporate actions that require shareholder approval. However, Section 14 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (Exchange Act) authorizes the SEC to promulgate rules governing the solicitation of proxies for most public companies. SEC Regulation 14A governs proxy solicitations and sets forth the categories of information that must be disclosed in proxy solicitations.

Largely as a result of the SEC's regulations, proxy advisory firms now wield outsized influence in the U.S. proxy system. In particular, regulators, market participants, and academic observers have highlighted potential conflicts of interest inherent in the business models and activities of proxy advisory firms. For example, as indicated above, proxy advisor firms may feel pressured by their largest clients—many of whom are activist investors—to issue vote recommendations that reflect those clients' specific agendas. In addition, proxy advisory firms often provide voting recommendations to investment advisers on matters for which they also provide consulting services to public companies.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, the reason I do this is, my colleague from Georgia somehow said that it was laughable, this characterization that it is adding paperwork.

That is exactly what this bill does. In fact, in this exhibit, this is a Republican summary of their own bill. It says: ''The information contained in the statement must be filed with the SEC. . . .''

The whole bill is about adding paperwork. That is what the bill does. You can argue it is paperwork all you want because corporate CEOs want it and many existing board members want it. Investors don't want it. But we are talking about additional paperwork, and there is nothing in that statement that you can refute because the Republican bill summary explains that that is what they are doing. I mean, there is no disagreement.

And he is correct. I am sure there are some Democrats who support these bills, some Republicans who support them, some Republicans and Democrats who might oppose these bills, but that is what the bill does, it adds paperwork. That is why I mentioned I was surprised to see it come out of the Financial Services Committee that, in general, had been more interested in reducing paperwork. Here, they are interested in adding compliance cost and paperwork to investors.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up SEAN PATRICK MALONEY's bill, H.R. 4585, which would block the FCC's rule rolling back net neutrality from taking effect to ensure the internet remains open to all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY) to discuss the proposal.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question so we can turn our attention to the issue that is so critical for this body to address right now. I speak of the Federal Communications Commission's decision and its assault on net neutrality.

The FCC is expected to vote tomorrow to eliminate the rules that protect

our internet. They are about to fix something that is not broken.

Now, maybe the words ''net neutrality'' make your eyes glaze over, but this issue is critical to anyone who uses the internet, which is really all of us, and it is not that complicated.

We call the rules that protect the current internet ''net neutrality'' because they, more or less, keep the internet neutral for everyone. A neutral internet means we all have access to the same legal content and services no matter where or how we get our internet.

These rules aren't new, and they are working. In fact, when you think about it, one of the last places where quality really reigns in our society is on the internet. We don't discriminate against the content or the intellectual creations of one young entrepreneur versus a big business or an established entity. It is one of the few places left in America where we are all on equal footing.

That is the current net neutrality system that we must protect. The folks who want to end net neutrality say they need to rewrite these rules to spur innovation.

Really, Mr. Speaker?

It is hard to look at the internet as it has blossomed in America and say we lack innovation. Innovation is everywhere. Look at all the new apps, websites, devices, and services that we all rely on every day.

This innovation exists not in spite of net neutrality. This innovation exists, in large part, because of net neutrality. Net neutrality is not a bug, Mr. Speaker. Net neutrality is a feature, and that is why we must protect it.

Of course, the real reason that people want to end net neutrality is money and profitability. Getting rid of net neutrality would expose consumers to all sorts of practices that, right now, are banned; practices like throttling, which means the internet company doesn't have to provide the same access to all companies. So they don't like one company, they can slow down your access to that site. They could block the site entirely.

They could tell a streaming service, like Netflix, that they have to pay more or make their site work differently. These extra costs for Netflix are going to get passed on to all of us, the consumers.

While some of us have a few choices when it comes to internet service providers, most of us don't.

How many have more than one option when it comes to internet in your home or office?

These companies have a functional monopoly, so many of them can do basically whatever they want and not lose customers. That is why we need some commonsense rules in place to protect consumers. These rules are called net neutrality.

So what can we do to stop the FCC from harming this free internet?

Well, I have introduced legislation in just the last couple of days that would block this proposal and protect the internet. H.R. 4585, the Save Net Neutrality Act, would simply prevent the FCC from relying on this process they have used to roll these rules back. It is really that simple. And we know the FCC's rulemaking process was so messed up, so corrupted, so screwed up that it is being investigated right now by the New York attorney general.

So I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to defeat the previous question so we can move to debate my bill, the Save Net Neutrality Act, and address this critical issue. This is our chance to protect the internet, as it has always existed, an internet that is working fine as it is.

To the FCC, we say: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say that I agree with my friend. I, too, said to the FCC in 2015: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

I thought the first 20-plus years of the internet were marked by innovation and freedom, and I wanted to keep that innovation and freedom flowing.

The Obama administration wanted to insert itself into the internet infrastructure in ways that it had never inserted government in infrastructure before. And from the numbers that I have seen—my friend may have different numbers—suggests that infrastructure investment has declined over those 2 years, first time in the history of internet infrastructure investment.

Mr. Speaker, reasonable men and women can disagree, but, understand, internet freedom and innovation is exactly what we all want to protect. Unfortunately, it is not what this rule is focused on today. This rule today is focused on simplification and expansion coming out of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. Speaker, one of the gentlemen I had the pleasure of being elected with in 2011 is the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY). He is one of the sponsors of one of these bills we have before us today. He has been a leader in the financial services field in his 7 years here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. DUFFY) to talk about the impact that his legislation will have on the process today.

Mr. DUFFY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding me this time.

Before I get to my bill, if I could just address a few points that have been brought up in this debate, which I am surprised at the fact that the Rules Committee doesn't actually talk about the rule. We talk about a whole bunch of different issues, but maybe I am new to this game.

I have to say that the gentleman from Georgia is correct. Infrastructure investment in the internet has gone down over the last 2 years.

I would agree: If it is not broken, why did President Obama try to fix it?

It was working really well for 20 years, and we had great innovation.

In regard to the tax bill, that is being debated. I think we are looking at some unique arguments that are being made. The Democrats are over there and they are fighting for the poor middle class American, and all Republicans are fighting for the rich. It is a great line. I love the line. But let's look to the wealthiest communities in America.

□ 1430

Go look right outside of D.C. Look in Northern Virginia. Are those wealthy communities, those counties in Virginia, are they Republican or Democrat? They are Democrat. L.A., San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, New York are all really rich communities that elect Democrats.

The wealthiest and biggest corporations, think of the tech industry in California or the biggest in America. What are they? They are Democrats. And that is why. When the tax debate comes up, you see Democrats fighting for loopholes and preferences for their big, wealthy friends.

And that is why, when Republicans here in this House said maybe to write off the mortgage interest on a $1 million home, that might be a little too much, maybe we should lower it to $500,000 of mortgage interest deductions, my Democratic friends freaked out.

Oh, no, the poor, middle class people in my community who have a $1 million mortgage, they are just having a tough time getting by—that was the argument that was made, fighting for the loopholes and preferences for the wealthiest Americans, while we are fighting for the middle class.

You talk about investment in my bill? You want to talk about pension funds? What has happened to pension funds in America? What has happened to American 401(k)'s? They have gone through the roof because we are lowering rules and regulations in a smart way, and we are going to reform our Tax Code to let families and businesses keep more of their income because they can spend it better than anyone in this town. They do it well.

So if you want to tank the markets, do what you have been doing and tank tax reform.

I want to get to my bill. This is on proxy advisory firms. I have taken awhile to get here, but the role of proxy advisory firms in the U.S. economy and shaping corporate governance is profound. These firms, they counsel pension funds and mutual funds and institutional investors on how to vote the shares of the corporations that they own.

You think, well, that is pretty benign. That is not a big issue.

Well, the shares of institutional investors' ownership in 1987 was 46 percent. Today, institutional investors own 75 percent of American corporations, billions of shares institutional investors control and look to proxy advisers for advice.

There are just two firms that control 97 percent of the market. So two companies, basically, are having a huge influence on American corporate governance, and they are involved in the writing and analysis and reports and voting recommendations that affect fundamental corporate transactions like mergers and acquisitions, approval of corporate directors and shareholder proposals—a huge impact on corporate governance.

And they are not immune from conflicts of interest. For example, in addition to providing recommendations to institutional investors about how to vote, proxy advisory firms may also advise companies about corporate governance issues, rate companies on corporate governance, help companies approve those ratings, and advise proponents about how to frame proposals to get the most votes.

I am going to come back to that in a second, but there was a Stanford University study that said institutional investors with assets under management of $100 billion or more, they only make 10 percent of the voting decisions, which means they offload 90 percent to proxy advisory firms.

So I don't know if you are familiar with the Mafia, but you have got the old storekeeper on the block, and he is robbed one night—right?—gets beaten up and robbed, and the next day, the thugs come in and go: Hey, hey, I hear you were robbed last night. You pay a little fee, we'll take care of you and make sure you are not robbed anymore.

That is exactly what proxy advisory firms are doing. They are like: Oh, you got a bad recommendation. Let me tell you what. You buy our services, and we can help you in the future. Just pay the ransom, and we will help take care of you in future recommendations.

This is not the way corporate governance should work. So my bill brings transparency and accountability to proxy advisory firms.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin, the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. DUFFY. I thought that is what Democrats want: making them more responsive; bringing more competition into the industry; making it better for investors; specifically, again, a bipartisan bill. Republicans and Democrats voted for this legislation.

But we will ensure that proxy advisory firms are registered with the SEC. Oh, how bad is that, registering with the SEC, a little oversight?

We are going to disclose potential conflicts of interest. How radical is that idea?

Shouldn't we tell people that we have a conflict of interest, and shouldn't all parties be aware of it?

I don't know why my friends across the aisle, or the gentleman from Colorado would be opposed to that.

Maintain a code of ethics. That is not shocking. I think most people would agree to that point.

And make publicly available the methodologies for formulating proxy recommendations and analysis.

Again, this is transparency. This is a commonsense bill that both Republicans and Democrats have voted for because we have recognized—and again, I am not a big regulation guy, as the gentleman from Colorado had pointed out. But when you consolidate a great deal of power in two companies that have a huge impact on American corporate governance, that makes a lot of people uncomfortable; and to have a little more oversight, to have a little more transparency, to have a little more accountability is a really, really good thing.

Some of the smallest companies have been the biggest complainers about how these proxy advisory firms have held them hostage. So let's support the small innovators, the big job creators in America that are complaining about the big proxy advisory firms. Let's stand with them and the families that they employ, and the future families, if they are successful, that they will employ, and let's give a little more control to proxy adviser firms.

I ask all to support this great bill.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I can see my good friend, Mr. DUFFY, is very excited about this, very engaged. It is a hard issue. I don't think many Democrats are that excited either way. They are all going to decide where they stand because it is just a fight between corporate CEOs and big institutional investors. They are both fine. I mean, you have got to pick one or the other in voting ''yes'' or ''no'' on this bill.

I think, as Democrats, we are more interested in how the people are doing who are working for those companies. How are we doing about sustainable practices over time?

Yes, every Democrat and Republican will cast their vote here either for institutional investors or for corporate CEOs and insular boards. Fine.

It does add paperwork. We talked about that. Mr. DUFFY said: Oh, it adds paperwork. Democrats should like it.

Yes, maybe there are some. I think some Democrats voted for it in committee. There are Democrats that want to increase paperwork. I am not one of them. I want to decrease paperwork and streamline it.

But, no, I am sure there will be some Democrats who support it. There are probably Democrats who, themselves, agree with the corporate CEOs over the institutional investors.

I have taken a company public. I have run private companies. I have seen this world. I think it is a good thing that the share of institutional investment has increased. I don't have the statistics in front of me. The gentleman from Wisconsin said something along the lines of 46 to 75 percent of the capital is institutional.

The big problem in public corporate governance is not too much shareholder engagement; it is not enough. When you have a diffuse shareholder base, when you don't have institutional investors, when you have, proverbially, 200 people who each own half a percent of the company or even more and they never talk and don't know each other, the ability of management to run amok in their own interests, to the detriment of the shareholders, plagues our public marketplaces.

So to have sophisticated, active investors who own enough and can work together, sometimes through these proxy fights when it comes to it, to be able to maximize long-term value is a good thing. It is a good thing.

Of course, everybody can point to times that it has been good for companies and times it has been bad. Generally speaking, this bill is adding paperwork to move the bar the wrong way, to move it towards management, away from shareholders.

I agree you need a balance. I wouldn't support a bill that moved it all the way to shareholders either. You are just encouraging agitators to get in on a short-term basis and speculative basis.

But I think we are close to the right place; and if you ask me where I would move it, I would move it a little the other way to empower shareholders. In fact, I have a bill that does that. It is part of a bigger bill, but it is a bill that gives shareholders more of a direct say over the pay of top executives because, again, there is a problem with insular corporate boards. Part of the answer is empowering institutional investors and empowering individual investors.

So, look, Democrats will hold their nose and vote for either corporate CEOs or for big investors, and that is fine. I firmly think that the best interests of our economy and the people and sustainability lie in moving it toward the investors.

This bill moves it the wrong way and adds paperwork and costs to the investors. So I really think it moves the wrong way, which is why I oppose this bill, and I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

There was also a discussion, Mr. DUFFY mentioned why aren't we just talking about the rule. It is because, Mr. Speaker, like 56 other rules, it is a closed rule.

What else can we say about closed rules? We have said everything. There are no amendments. I could spend an hour complaining about how they are not allowing amendments in and it is closed and so are 56 other rules, but it is more productive to get to the underlying issues because we have had the debate on closed rules 56 times just in the last 10 months.

That is a record, Mr. Speaker. You should be proud of presiding over a record number of closed rules for a United States Congress. But it is not very interesting to talk about for another hour.

So they will talk about an interesting bill, a minor bill. I think I discussed that. I mean, we have a government shutdown; we have an issue with tax reform; we have DREAMers; we have a million things we could be doing. This is a minor bill.

Okay. Let's talk about the merits of giving the current corporate boards that might be too insular and the current CEOs and management a little more power, like this bill does, by increasing red tape and paperwork on investors versus the merits of empowering investors. Fine, we will have that discussion. We will cast our ballots. We will see what happens.

Another issue that is very important and timely that this Congress should get to is the one my good friend Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY raised. When we defeat the previous question, we can bring up an issue that, again, is not a partisan issue.

As the cofounder of Apple, Steve Wozniak, said, the end of net neutrality would end the internet as we know it. It is an issue every American citizen is looking to us to take leadership on.

In my time in office, I have had to make a number of controversial votes, whether it is for the Affordable Care Act or repeal of this or that, and oftentimes I hear from constituents on both sides. I remember we got thousands of letters for the Affordable Care Act, thousands of letters against it—very typical.

Net neutrality has been a unique and singular experience in my 9 years in Congress. We received 1,500 calls and over 5,000 emails about the issue, and I asked my staff to double-check this because I didn't believe this, and they did. One hundred percent of the emails and calls were for net neutrality. That is right. Not a single constituent of mine contacted me on the other side.

In a district that has a plurality of unaffiliated voters and a similar number of Republicans and Democrats, they are never shy to contact me. So it is not partisan. It certainly united Republicans, unaffiliated voters, and Democrats in my district to be unanimously for net neutrality, which surprised me. But it also means that Congress should not be tone deaf to that, and that is why it is important to defeat the previous question.

Republican Senators like Senator THUNE have come together to call on colleagues to come together and protect net neutrality. My good friend and colleague from Colorado MIKE COFFMAN announced that we should—the FCC should delay their vote and that we should protect net neutrality.

It is common sense, Mr. Speaker, and by defeating the previous question, we can get on to an issue that the American people care about rather than a fight between CEOs and investors and which side you take. It is about protecting your internet in your home so you can access the content of your choice—a consumer issue and an issue for small businesses.

We had a digital roundtable last night, Mr. Speaker. I think thousands of people from my district watched as I had several experts, including several small businesses from Colorado, talk about the importance of net neutrality to them in creating jobs and being able to have a predictable and sustainable business model, and then being able to compete with large, entrenched companies and be disruptive with new innovation.

So I hope that we can defeat the previous question and get on to that. If we don't, I am going to ask my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the bill that adds paperwork and costs, requiring SEC filings for the investors who are fighting bills, who are fighting proxy fights, and then I urge my colleagues to look closely at the privacy bill.

That one, again, I would not characterize as a major bill. I will be voting ''no.'' I understand there might be some Republicans and Democrats voting ''yes'' on that one as well. But, you know, whether they delete that clause or not is hardly the game changer for the economy that tax reform will be.

I have ideas, bipartisan ideas, bills that I have sponsored with my Republican colleagues that should be part of tax reform, that would help the economy go, that would create far more jobs than a two-sentence disclosure, whether it is there or not, and, frankly, more important, also, than this, whether the proxy fight people have to file with the SEC. I mean, I am sure they will be able to do it. I mean, yes, you Republicans want to give them more paperwork and create more bureaucracy, but I am sure they will survive.

□ 1445

But let's do something important like open process tax reform. We could be debating amendments right now and voting on them like our job—you know, like 100 amendments from Republicans and Democrats. I would even be open to let's just consider bipartisan amendments, throw out amendments that only Republicans support or only Democrats support.

To be fair, you are in the majority, Mr. Speaker, how about just amendments that Republicans alone support or are bipartisan? You don't have to do any Democratic amendments only because let's just have an open process. Let's allow some amendments.

Every amendment was locked out of tax reform. I offered like, what, 16 myself? I remember my colleague Mr. WOODALL was there. They were commonsense ideas. There was a little fix I did with Mr. TIPTON from Colorado for Kombucha, that is fermented tea, and it had to do with the tax treatment, de minimis. Senator CORY GARDNER supports it in the Senate, our Republican Senator. Noncontroversial, next-to-no fiscal impact, and the Rules Committee still didn't even allow me to debate the amendment on the floor for 10 minutes, for 5 minutes, for 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, enough with these closed rules, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, we have a couple problems with this rule. First of all, the rule brings to the floor the wrong bills. These are minor bills. I will give a recap in a moment, but oh, my goodness. Two sentences of a disclosure and a little more filing costs for pensions and investors. Okay. We will get past that. They probably won't become law anyway. You can blame it on the Senate, you can blame it on the House, but most of these things we do don't become law.

I understand that many of my colleagues are frustrated with the Senate, but whatever the case, we just do these things.

But there is stuff that might become law, that could become law, like tax reform; like the fact that the government is shutting down next week if we don't continue the funding. We have a clock ticking on our debt ceiling. We have 800,000 aspiring Americans who don't even know if they can go to work legally, like they can today, in another few months because of President Trump's decision to end their provisional status.

These are real issues—the cost of healthcare going up for my constituents and yours. But we are not doing that. We are bringing up two bills. I will give you the summary of them. Even these two bills, closed process, no amendments. If I was able to offer floor amendments, as I said, I could offer an amendment that would actually move the balance the other way toward investors and empowering investor activism, perhaps even look at giving them a safer pay, if you will, over executive pay, and reining in some of the problems of this bill. But we are not allowed. We are not allowed to offer any amendments here on the floor.

Again, again, again,

charge, they should offer more open amendments. There is no question. But Republicans, whatever they complained about the Democrats, they outdid them by a big factor. Ten months, 56 bills that no single Member of the House is allowed to offer an amendment on just to have a fair up-or-down vote. It is wrong. It is wrong.

That is why I hope my colleagues can defeat this rule to say: Enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, we have to defeat this rule and move on to the issues important to the American people, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, my friend from Colorado is right. Time management is an important issue here on the floor, and we have got to manage it, whether it is closing statements or whether it is floor time throughout the day.

Every bill we bring to the floor is not going to be the most important bill that we bring to the floor, Mr. Speaker, by definition.

I hope that my colleagues were listening intently to my friend from Colorado, not necessarily during his opening statement, and certainly not during his closing statement, but during the middle statement where he was talking about his vast knowledge of corporate boards and corporate structures.

I have the pleasure of serving on the Rules Committee with Mr. POLIS, Mr. Speaker, and there are not going to be many Members of this institution who have either been more successful in their private life, not just talking about it, but doing it, when it comes to leading institutions, and Members who work harder to try to find some common ground to move things forward.

I was just telling Ms. Rossi on my staff, Mr. Speaker, that it troubles me more when Mr. POLIS is on the floor and we can't find agreement, because I believe very often he tries harder than most to find that agreement here. Mr. Speaker, you see it on the front page of the newspaper day after day after day, folks talk about this institution as if we will never find agreement with each other.

There are some issues of principle where finding agreement is hard, where we just fundamentally disagree with one another.

It is not the case today, though, Mr. Speaker. Today, the case is that we have two bills that moved through regular order in the Financial Services Committee. That means, Mr. Speaker, that the committee took up the legislation first, that the committee sorted out the legislation first, and, Mr. Speaker, these bills, both of them, passed the Financial Services Committee with big bipartisan votes.

There are many opportunities for us to come to the floor and talk about things that divide us that we will never find agreement on. That is not today. Today, we have a chance to come to the floor and talk about differences that we can make together. Differences that are not just bipartisan, but differences that are nonpartisan; good ideas that can make a difference one life, one bill at a time.

Mr. Speaker, these bills are coming today under a closed rule for one, under a structured rule for the other. That is true. For the uninitiated, Mr. Speaker, that means that amendments aren't going to be offered. It doesn't mean that amendments weren't allowed, Mr. Speaker.

We sent out the call to the entire House of Representatives, 435 Members. We said we have two bills coming before the Rules Committee; we want you to send us all of your ideas, all of the different ways that you think these two bills can be improved.

We got back one idea. One. And we made it in order for a vote on the floor of the House. Dadgummit, Mr. Speaker, I think it is going to make the bill better. I intend to support that amendment that we made in order. It is a Democrat amendment. It came from my friend Mr. CLAY on the other side of the aisle. I intend to support it because I think it is going to make the bill better.

Are there issues that are complex, that are partisan, that are structured in such a way that having an open rule isn't the choice that gets made? Of course there are. Of course there are.

I think my friend is right to criticize the majority when the process gets closed down in this way. But today, Mr. Speaker, I think my friend is wrong to suggest that the process is being closed down. The process was opened up to the entire institution. One amendment was received, one amendment was made in order. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that will be a practice that we continue going forward. Two good bills today, Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues support this rule: one from my friend Mr. TROTT, one from my friend Mr. DUFFY, and the bipartisan amendment offered by my friend Mr. CLAY.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this rule, and then I hope they will come back to the floor and support the underlying bills as well.

The material previously referred to by Mr. POLIS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 657 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4585) to prohibit the Federal Communications Commission from relying on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the matter of restoring internet freedom to adopt, amend, revoke, or otherwise modify any rule of the Commission. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 4. Cause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 4585.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R–Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution. . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal

to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

## IRANIAN LEADERSHIP ASSET TRANSPARENCY ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIDSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 658 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1638.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1456

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1638), to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes, with Mr. MITCHELL in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, introduced by my colleague and dear friend from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN).

This legislation requires the Treasury Secretary to report to Congress on the assets held by the Islamic Republic of Iran's most senior political and military leaders, and on the probable sources and uses of those assets.

A classified version, if necessary, would be available, as appropriate, to Congress, and a public version of the report would be posted on the Treasury Department's website in English and in the major languages used within Iran that could easily be downloaded.

The genius of this latter point is that it will allow the average Iranian to understand and circulate information of how their leaders are, in a phrase, robbing them blind, as well as aiding and abetting terrorists.

Iran's top political, military, and business leaders, if there is much of a distinction between those roles in Iran, fund terrorist-related activity, we know this, and through intricate financial arrangements that give them great flexibility in moving their money.

According to the nongovernmental organization Transparency International, Iran's economy is characterized by high levels of official and institutional corruption, and there is substantial involvement by Iran's security forces, particularly involving the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Unsurprisingly, then, members of Iran's senior political and military leadership have acquired significant personal and institutional wealth by using their positions to secure control of major portions of the Iranian national economy.

Some estimates put their iron grip at a third or more of the country's economy, and some individual holdings in the billions of dollars; all at a time when the average Iranian citizen earns the equivalent of about $15,000 a year.

The unwise sanctions relief provided through the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran resulted in the unwarranted removal of many Iranian entities that are tied to government corruption from the list of entities sanctioned by the United States.

□ 1500

Thankfully, however, the Trump administration has, in recent months, levied a number of needed new sanctions on Iranian individuals and entities. Still, the Transparency International index of perceived public corruption in Iran is higher than ever.

As well, the Treasury Department has identified Iran as a country of ''primary concern for money laundering.'' Separately, the State Department has continually identified Iran as the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism. Iran is, the State Department tells us, a country that has ''repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism,'' and ''continues to sponsor terrorist groups around the world, principally through its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.''

The bill before us today, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, requires the Treasury Department again to list the known assets of senior Iranian officials in a form that is easily understandable and accessible to individual Iranians, as well as to those in the financial or business sector who might be concerned—hopefully concerned—about inadvertently doing business with a corrupt Iranian entity.

The bill also requires the Treasury to evaluate the effectiveness of existing sanctions against Iran and make any appropriate recommendations for improving the effectiveness of sanctions.

The bill passed the Financial Services Committee last month with a bipartisan support vote of 43–16. The House approved a nearly identical bill just 18 months ago by a very strong vote of 282–143.

As passed by the committee, this year's version has an important addition, a sense of the Congress section, that urges the Treasury Secretary, in addition to other sources, to seek information for the report from private sector sources that search, analyze, and, if necessary, translate publicly available, high veracity, official records overseas, and provide methods of searching and analyzing such data in ways useful to law enforcement.

These source of services provide information that could augment information that is gathered, often by classified means, and provide a final public report that helps give the world a better picture of the true nature of Iran's economy.

Mr. Chairman, I urge immediate passage of Mr. POLIQUIN's thoughtful and bipartisan bill. I appreciate his leadership to bring us here today, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
*Washington, DC, December 6, 2017.*

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,
*Chairman, Committee on Financial Services, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act.

I agree that the Foreign Affairs Committee may be discharged from further action on this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the Floor, subject to the understanding that this waiver does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Foreign Affairs Committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. The Committee also reserves the right to seek an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this bill, and would appreciate your support for any such request.

I ask that you place our exchange of letters into the Congressional Record during

floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
*Chairman.*

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
*Washington, DC, December 7, 2017.*

Hon. ED ROYCE,
*Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, DC.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: Thank you for your December 6th letter regarding H.R. 1638, the ''Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act'', as amended.

I am most appreciative of your decision to forego action on H.R. 1638 so that it may move expeditiously to the House floor. I acknowledge that although you are waiving action on the bill, the Committee on Foreign Affairs is in no way waiving its jurisdictional interest in this or similar legislation. In addition, if a conference is necessary on this legislation, I will support any request that your committee be represented therein.

Finally, I shall be pleased to include your letter and this letter in our committee's report on H.R. 1638 and in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the same.

Sincerely,

JEB HENSARLING,
*Chairman.*

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, the legislation before us now, H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, represents what the Republican majority has become very good at doing, advancing bad public policy while claiming to advance the public interest.

H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, would require the Secretary of the Treasury to report to Congress on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control of certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, along with a description of how these assets were acquired and are employed, regardless of whether such individuals are subject to U.S. sanctions.

Although increasing transparency into corrupt regimes is a laudable goal, H.R. 1638 works counter not only to its own stated objectives, but also U.S. national security interests.

First, the level of scrutiny that would be needed to produce a credible report would place a very real strain on the Treasury Department, diverting significant resources away from Treasury investigators who are tasked with targeting conduct that is actually sanctionable; implementing existing U.S. sanction programs; and uncovering illicit conduct across the globe, including, importantly, efforts to identify the web of business interests that continue to enable North Korea to evade U.S. and international sanctions.

In addition to diverting scarce and critical resources, the bill's required report will have little use as a compliance tool, given that the most important parts would be classified, undercutting the legislation's own stated objective to help make financial institutions' required compliance with remaining sanctions more easily understood.

In fact, the creation of such a list, which would not be tied to any prohibition or legal action, would more than likely create confusion among the Office of Foreign Assets Control's regulated public and also mislead companies to believe that the Treasury list replaces the due diligence efforts that they should otherwise be doing prior to engaging in business in Iran.

Moreover, because the report would be largely classified, the bill would do little to draw the Iranian public's attention to the corruption and unjust enrichment of their leaders, which is another stated purpose of the bill. In fact, any classified portion would inevitably be rejected by both the Iran regime and its people as U.S. propaganda, and a predictable attack on the country's government by the United States.

The true purpose of this legislation is to create reputational risk for companies that might seek to do legitimate business with Iran. For this reason, the bill would be a strategic mistake, as its report would undoubtedly be seized upon by Iran as an intentional effort to discourage international investment in Iran, which would be viewed by Iran and likely by the major world powers who joined us in the JCPOA as well as a violation of the expressed U.S. commitment under the nuclear deal not to interfere with the full realization of the relief provided to Iran under the accord.

When a nearly identical version of this bill was considered last Congress, the Obama White House threatened to veto the bill, stating that it would, ''endanger our ability to ensure Iran's nuclear program is and remains exclusively peaceful.''

Moreover, the Obama administration cautioned that the report called for in the bill would also compromise critical intelligence sources and methods. On that score, I would also note that the reporting requirement in the legislation calls for information about how sanctions evasion and illicit conduct is practiced, and potential countermeasures.

It seems far from prudent to give tips to our adversaries about how we learn about their misconduct and how we plan to respond. This legislation would have very limited practical utility, despite the huge diversion of resources it would take to produce. It also fails to meet its own stated objectives, including serving any usefulness as a compliance tool.

Finally, the measure would also likely have a negative impact on the continued viability of the nuclear deal, which is clearly a central objective. I am hard-pressed to think of a single piece of legislation that works so strongly against every single policy goal it claims to advance. Few issues are more important to global peace and security than preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. This bill would do nothing to advance that goal. In fact, if enacted, it could do grave damage to the important progress that has been made.

Mr. Chairman, I would urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 10 seconds simply to remind the ranking member that in the State Department's latest Country Reports on Terrorism, Iran is labeled the ''world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism.''

Why we would want less information as opposed to more information on that rogue state is beyond me.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN), the sponsor of the legislation and a distinguished member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of my bill, and I am grateful to you for moving this very important bipartisan bill through the House Financial Services Committee.

I also want to thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who supported this bill last year. Unfortunately, it got stuck in the Senate, so we have got to do it again this year, but I am thrilled to be here.

Mr. Chairman, the primary responsibility of every Member of Congress, whether you are on the left side or the right side of the aisle, no matter what State you are from, what part of the country you are from, the major responsibility, the primary responsibility is to support and defend our Constitution. To me, that means protecting our families and those American citizens abroad.

Now, our moms and dads in Maine, Mr. Chairman, and across this country, are increasingly alarmed by the frequency of terrorist attacks here at home; another attempted 2 days ago in New York City. Today, Mr. Chairman, there are 1,000 investigations dealing with terrorist activities across this land in all 50 States. That is why H.R. 1638 is so important. This bill will help keep our families safe and keep them free.

In doing so, we must make sure this issue is not a political issue. National security never should be a political issue. Mr. Chairman, the Iranian Government, as Mr. HENSARLING just mentioned, is the chief state sponsor of terrorism and instability in this world.

These senior political leaders and their military leaders, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, they train, they arm, and they fund terrorist organizations around the world. They have become experts at using the internet and social media to radicalize, recruit, and direct terrorists around the globe, including here in the United States of America.

Mr. Chairman, the Iranian Government has American blood on its hands. Now, Mr. Chairman, there are approximately 70 to 80 top political and military leaders in Iran that control about one-third of their domestic economy. They use their power to corrupt the telecommunications industry, the construction industry, and other important ones in that land.

Reuters has conducted an investigation through publicly available information that found the Supreme Leader of Iran alone has accumulated tremendous personal wealth through a foundation claiming to help the poor. Now, while the corruption has grown in Iran, the average citizen there earns the equivalent of $15,000 per year.

Mr. Chairman, the citizens of Iran and the people of this world should know how much wealth has been accumulated by those that sponsor terrorism and what that money is being used for.

Companies across the globe that are looking to do business with Iran should understand what they might be getting into. So I disagree with my colleague from California, the ranking member, who says that this is going to possibly create confusion; that it will possibly cause businesses around the world to hesitate from investing in Iran.

Well, guess what, Mr. Chairman. That is a good idea.

My Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act is a straightforward, main, commonsense bill. It simply requires the Department of Treasury to collect, to maintain, and to post online the list of these 70 to 80 senior political and military leaders and the assets, their personal assets, how this money was acquired, and what it is being used for.

As Mr. HENSARLING mentioned, it will require the Treasury Department to post this on their website in English as well as in Farsi, Arabic, and Azeri, the three languages that are mostly used in that country.

I might also add that my colleague on the other side of the aisle might be a little bit confused about this issue, but the information posted on this website will be that that is publicly available. There will be no information that should not be posted there that only Congress should have access to.

I have heard, Mr. Chairman, critics of this bill saying: Well, you know, it is not a good idea to expose the Iranian Government's corruption in funding of terrorism because, if you do so, well, the Iranian political and military leaders might not want to work with us.

Are you kidding?

These are the radicals who regularly chant ''Death to America.''

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Maine.

□ 1515

Mr. POLIQUIN. Hoping that these folks also abandon their support of terrorism by not shedding light on their corruption doesn't make any sense. Hope, Mr. Chairman, is not a national security strategy.

My bill makes sure that Congress gets its priorities straight. Protecting American families here at home and safeguarding our troops around the world who are fighting for our freedom is what we should be doing every way we can, and that is what this bill does.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that using one click of a computer from any corner of the globe to help expose illicit activities by the chief state sponsor of terrorism is a very, very good idea.

Let's stand up for all the peace-loving nations in the world. Let's stand up to help our families protect their kids. Let's stand up to protect our homeland. I ask everyone, Republicans and Democrats, please vote ''yes'' for H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK), who is a member of the Financial Services Committee and who is my friend.

Mr. HECK. I thank the ranking member, Mr. Chairman, for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, this bill targets the leadership of Iran, and, frankly, that is probably a worthy goal in some regards. I think it eventually envisions publicizing negative information about them, and that might be an effective tool as well. We all know that. We have been through campaigns. We know negative advertising works.

That said, I oppose this legislation, and I do so for two reasons. The first is resources are finite. They are not unlimited; they are finite. Tracking down all the assets of these named Iranian leaders takes significant time, effort, and personnel.

Where are those resources supposed to come from?

All around this city, everybody is agitating for deeper cuts to nondefense discretionary accounts. If we are going to make cuts, we are going to have to make some tough choices.

The personnel responsible for implementing this bill would be diverted from terrorist financing and money laundering. Let me say that again. The people, the personnel responsible for implementing this bill would be diverted from terrorist financing and money laundering.

Propaganda about corruption of Iranian leadership—which I stipulate to here up front—could be valuable, but it can't be more valuable than stopping actual terrorist financing. Terrorist financing should be our target. Money laundering should be our target, not garden-variety corruption.

We had a lengthy discussion in committee just yesterday about using money laundering authorities to fight human trafficking. For God's sake, that has to seem more valuable than propaganda. It has to.

So until we solve these tight budget constraints, I think we need to make the hard choice about what our priorities are and how to prioritize resources for stopping, again, money laundering and terrorism financing. Leave this effort for a world where the sequester has been lifted.

The second reason why I oppose this legislation, I can't help wondering: Shouldn't we apply this principle more broadly?

The idea here is that we should investigate and publicize it when a country's leadership has undisclosed assets, especially if those are overseas. That is the point of this legislation. We should investigate and publicize it when a country's leadership is using government resources to enrich itself. But why—why—just apply that principle to Iran?

I am informed in my point of view here by wisdom I found in this black, leather-bound book that I gratefully received when I was sworn into office 5 years ago. In fact, the passage that I will cite you actually occurs in two places. Let me share it with you now:

''How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you, yourself, fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.''

So I wonder: When is this Congress going to turn its attention to the plank in our eye?

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), who is the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and a senior member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Chairman, with all due respect to the arguments on moral equivalency with respect to Iran, the reality is that this is a government that starts its morning prayers with: ''Death to America. Death to Israel.'' The Ayatollah makes it clear he means it.

So, yes, we should try to remove the plank from our eye, but we should not remove our eyes from the fact that what we have in terms of policy being directed from the Ayatollah and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is a policy that calls for the destruction of the United States of America.

Now, Mr. Chairman, this bill has a powerful goal, and it is to expose the corrupt nature of the Iranian regime. But when we talk about why, the answer is because the personnel responsible for carrying out these assassinations, that have us concerned about carrying out terror are, in fact, the leadership in Iran of these organizations that we attempt to identify here. That is the job of doing terror research and cutting off terror finance. That is what we are supposed to be doing.

This regime claims to be more than a government. It claims to be a revolution. They call themselves the Islamic

Revolution. But when you look at it closely, as this bill requires the Treasury Department to do, the regime in Tehran resembles something else, a criminal enterprise, because, from the Supreme Leader to the Revolutionary Guard, these so-called servants of the Revolution control one-third of the Iranian economy because they seized it. They seized everybody's private property in terms of these companies. The Supreme Leader's empire alone is worth $95 billion.

This is called the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order, or Setad. It holds stakes in just about every sector of the Iranian industry, including finance, oil, and telecommunications.

These funds are not simply used to enrich Iranian officials. That is not our problem here. It is not that they are propping up the regime. It is thanks to Iran's lack of money laundering control they are easily used to destabilize the entire region. That is what they are doing now by funding terrorism abroad and fueling Iran's ballistic missile program at home.

These ICBMs, by the way, they announce, are intended for us.

So that is why, as this bill says, the Treasury Department—and the bill notes this—has identified Iran as a jurisdiction of primary money laundering concern. This means that any transaction with Iran risks supporting the regime's ongoing illicit activities, their terrorists activities.

Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague, Mr. POLIQUIN, for introducing this bill and Chairman HENSARLING for working with us to get it to the floor.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), who is a longtime supporter of diplomacy with Iran and a strong supporter of the nuclear deal.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentlewoman's courtesy, and I appreciate her advocacy on this.

This is serious business. There are people—no secret—in the administration and there are people in Congress who would like to undermine this agreement. The mixed signals that have been sent by the administration are truly disturbing.

One has to wonder what North Korea is thinking about, that there are people who suggest that we ought to go ahead and blow it up when, in fact, they are abiding by the terms of the agreement, and officials in the administration agree with this. What sort of deterrent is that to North Korea in terms of its reckless action with nuclear weapons? It seems to reinforce that behavior.

But there are also elements in Iran, hardliners who didn't agree with this agreement, who felt that it was too evenhanded, who felt that the leadership gave up too much, and who don't want closer relationships with the United States or the other Western powers that worked with us—including China and Russia—to enact this historic agreement, which, as I pointed out, was agreed to even by officials in the Trump administration that Iran has abided by.

Are they a nation of bad actors? Absolutely. There are forces within the government that are very destructive. But the point is we focused on something that all of us agree is absolutely critical, and that is not having Iran rushing forward to become another nuclear state. We have seen that the breakout time under this agreement has lengthened. It is acting as we intended.

It was also one of those rare areas where we actually had Germany, Great Britain, France, Russia, and China working with us to negotiate an agreement.

Now, this is going to be perceived as an effort by the United States to undermine the agreement. Should we give them and the hardliners in Iran an excuse to walk away because we violated it? What is going to be the assessment of our allies who are deeply committed to this and have resisted efforts to unravel it?

We need all the help we can get in the international arena. We have watched this administration systematically isolate us, this last week with the reckless decision to go ahead and relocate the Embassy—or at least claim we are going to relocate the Embassy—condemned by virtually everybody else in the world. We are standing alone with an action to destabilize a very volatile situation.

This comes forward at a time when Iran is abiding by it, to go ahead and crank up the report on the assets of a variety of Iran's senior political, religious, and military leaders, including people who aren't subject to the sanctions.

It is placing, it has been mentioned, strain on the Department that has finite resources—it needs to focus on things—taking away resources from efforts to target on actual sanctionability. It seems to be decidedly wrongheaded.

It is interesting that Congress had until this week to reimpose the sanction lifted under the agreement per Trump's decertification in October. Congress chose not to. I think that was a wise decision. To me, it indicates, at least, that the agreement has been largely successful.

But, if we are going to jeopardize the framework, giving the hardline elements an opportunity to claim that we are repudiating, while giving a green light to some of the folks there who have no intention of being able to work on a cooperative basis, we ought not to fan the flames. We ought to be trying to nurture opportunities for cooperation.

We should focus on areas where they are doing things we don't agree with. If you want to target some specific sanctions that we somehow haven't imposed that are within the purview of the framework and wouldn't violate it, go ahead. But having these actions, I think, sends the wrong signal. It is the wrong resource.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is important to reject this legislation.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER), who is a hardworking member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Chairman, since our founding, and as Ronald Reagan emphasized regularly, America has stood as a shining city upon a hill whose beacon light guides freedom-loving people everywhere. Today we have an opportunity to shine a little brighter.

As we continue our battle to defeat terrorism, the Islamic Republic of Iran remains dangerously corrupt. While the average Iranian earns a mere $15,000 a year, corrupt, top political and military leaders control an estimated one-third of the nation's total economy. These same leaders are, more often than not, the same ones who repeatedly provide support for acts of terrorism in the Middle East and continue to sponsor terrorist groups around the world.

Unfortunately, the Iranian Government continues to tolerate this corruption, which is why the State Department has named Iran as a country of primary concern for money laundering and it continues to be listed as a state sponsor of terrorism.

These officials who perpetuate such destructive and destabilizing behavior should and need to be exposed.

Today, I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act. This bill will require a list of the known assets of senior Iranian officials to be made publicly available in all three of Iran's major languages. Specifically, the U.S. Treasury Secretary will submit a report to Congress on the assets held by Iran's most senior political, military, and business leaders and on the probable sources and uses of the assets.

□ 1530

This report will serve as yet another tool in the toolbox of businesses and financial institutions, both foreign and domestic, to better comply with existing sanction regimes and international financial restrictions.

It will provide clarity and certainty for companies when determining the legitimacy of their business partners if they decide that doing business with Iran is in their interest.

Moreover, with this information, with better knowledge of where their money is going, Iranians who wish to invest not in terrorism or in corruption, but in freedom, can.

Today, we can help the freedom-loving people of Iran. We can help shine a light on Iran's corruption, and America can continue to be a shining city on a hill.

I appreciate the work of my colleague from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN),

whom I am proud to serve with on the Terrorism and Illicit Finance Subcommittee. I thank Chairman HENSARLING and Monetary Policy and Trade Subcommittee Chairman BARR for moving such an important bill through the committee and to the floor today. I urge all of my colleagues to vote in support of H.R. 1638.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I would like the author of this bill, Mr. POLIQUIN, and perhaps the chairman of our committee, Mr. HENSARLING, to answer the question that I am about to propose, and that is this: We have allies with us in this agreement. This is an agreement that was worked on for a long time. We have Russia, China, Germany, England, and France. What are our allies saying about our attempt to interfere with the agreement?

What are they saying about whether or not we can be trusted to live up to the commitments that we have made?

What are they saying about our attempts to add to, lengthen, and create new, really, what have become obstacles to peace?

I would ask my friends on the opposite side of the aisle, as they talk about targeting certain leaders—I don't know what leaders they are talking about—and wanting to know about their assets and where their assets came from and how they are being used, I ask my friends on the opposite side of the aisle: Are you willing to do that for certain leaders in our own country?

I just heard from one of the speakers, I believe it was Mr. ROYCE from California, who identified the worth of one of the supposed leaders. It seems to me that it did not nearly match the worth of many of those who are in our Cabinet and who are in higher places in our government. And I wonder what we are trying to do.

First, answer the question, if you will, about what our allies are saying. And secondly, answer the question about disclosure as it relates to those at the highest office in our country and those who are serving in the Cabinet.

Also, when you talk about money laundering, answer the question about the relationship between the leader of this country and Deutsche Bank, that is known as a money laundering bank, that is involved with the President of the United States.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DAVIDSON), who is never an apologist for the leading state sponsor of terrorism in the world. He is a proud member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. DAVIDSON. Mr. Chairman, I just have to say, I am in shock. I am listening to the kind of thinking that, if it had caught on in the eighties, may have allowed the Cold War to continue.

When I enlisted in the Army, I was privileged to serve in Germany, wear our country's uniform, and see the fruit of generations of work. I also saw the concern that Germans had that Ronald Reagan was going to cause World War III and that actual leadership was somehow a problem.

Instead what we saw was that Mr. Gorbachev didn't tear down the wall. The United States of America didn't tear down the wall. The East German people tore down their own wall.

And why did they do that?

They did that because they knew the truth of what was on the other side.

Mr. POLIQUIN's bill is a major effort to try to help the people of Iran get their country back. They are under a strong authoritarian leadership system that has oppressed their people and caused harm throughout the region and, in fact, throughout the planet.

Meanwhile, I am so thankful that this is a bipartisan bill. The Members opposed to this would have asked more public disclosure of public company CEOs than they would of enemies of our country, and that is hard to understand.

Mr. Chair, I was sent here to represent the people of the Eighth District of Ohio and to support and defend the United States of America. I don't think there is anyone who has sworn an oath to support and defend 80 leaders in Iran.

This bill does not violate the JCPOA. It doesn't touch it. It simply says we are going to gather this information.

As far as diverting resources, this is the leading state sponsor of terror. It is precisely focused on the problem, and it gives the people of Iran a chance for freedom that so many people of the world enjoy.

I am thankful that we have the opportunity to try to make this difference. I encourage every Member of the House to vote for it, and those who thought they were opposed, to reconsider a rational, measured action to try to change the world for good.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chair, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN) will give some information that I think is very important to understand how this bill would work.

The gentleman who just spoke said that this has nothing to do with the agreement. Then what is it you are adding to? What is it you are trying to change or make better? If it has nothing to do with the agreement, then why are we doing it?

Mr. POLIQUIN. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I yield to the gentleman from Maine to respond to that description of what this bill is all about.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Chairman, to the gentlewoman from California and to the other side of the aisle, I do want to make sure I make a few things clear.

First of all, I am not sure if it was the gentlewoman or someone else saying: Why in the dickens would we divert resources away from fighting terrorism to post this information on the Treasury website? It costs too much.

Well, with all due respect, the CBO estimates it will cost $500,000 to do this for 2 years. The United States Treasury Department has a budget of $14 billion per year. That is number one.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Reclaiming my time, I thank you for wanting to talk about something else, but I yielded to you to see if you could help me with information about what was stated that the gentleman who spoke before you said that this bill had nothing to do with the agreement.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Is the gentleman prepared to respond to the question that I have raised?

If you are going to talk about what this bill has to do with the agreement, when the gentleman said it has nothing to do with the agreement, then I yield to the gentleman from Maine.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Chairman, the dangerous Iran nuclear deal that was put together a year and a half or 2 years ago has absolutely nothing to do with exposing the wealth that has cumulated through corruption by the top 70 to 80 Iranian political and military leaders and posting that for the world to see. I am sure the ranking member knows this has zero to do with the Iran nuclear deal.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Reclaiming my time, we know that there are individuals who are sanctionable in the deal.

What I thought you were attempting to do is to expand that and to identify more leaders and try and understand where the assets come from, what they use them for, whether or not they are involved in money laundering. But the gentleman said it had nothing to do with the deal.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia). The Chair would remind all Members to direct their remarks to the Chair, please.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds just to say in the time the ranking member was speaking, I went back, yet again, to read the nine-page bill. Nowhere is the JCPOA mentioned in the bill.

Iran was the leading state sponsor of terrorism before the JCPOA. They remain the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism after the JCPOA. We ought to know something about the leadership of this terrorist nation, and I think the next speaker will tell us even more.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD), another outstanding member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of Mr. POLIQUIN's bill, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, and I thank him for his leadership on this issue.

It is not uncommon these days to see Iranian fingerprints all over the instability and unrest that plague the Middle East. That is why our own State

Department classifies Iran as a country of primary concern for money laundering and international terror financing.

Just this weekend, Mr. Chair, we saw their handiwork yet again. This time, it was Lebanon, where the now largely Iranian-backed Hezbollah influenced government called for economic sanctions on the United States. Why?

Simply for recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Just a few at the top in this corrupt Iranian regime are flush with cash, but they support illicit causes and terror in the Middle East, all the while the average Iranian gets by on an average salary of $15,000 a year.

Accountability for those profiting at the top, at the expense of those suffering at the bottom, is long overdue. Luckily, Mr. POLIQUIN's bill helps us to achieve this goal by requiring that the Treasury Department provide a report to Congress on the financial assets of these senior Iranian officials involved in corruption and illicit finance.

Also, if enacted, this bill will shed light on Iranian terror activities and let the Iranian people know how their leaders actually operate. This is a key aspect of the bill, since most news is disseminated through government-controlled outlets. True information is hard to come by.

The bottom line is this: This is an important piece of legislation that I believe will help disrupt the Iranian terror network. I urge all my Democrat colleagues to support this measure. Let's send a message to this regime that this body, the people's House, is united on this front, and let's send a message to the Iranian people that we are with them as well.

I again thank my friend, Mr. POLIQUIN from Maine, for his leadership on this issue, and I urge adoption of his legislation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. May I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California has 10½ minutes remaining.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I have here a Statement of Administrative Policy from the previous President, where he advised us when this bill came before the House before that it would be vetoed by the administration.

I will read to you from one of the paragraphs in the veto message. He said, in addition: ''This bill's required public postings also may be perceived by Iran, and likely our Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA, partners as an attempt to undermine the fulfillment of our commitments, in turn, impacting the continued viability of this diplomatic arrangement that peacefully and verifiably prevents Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.''

If the JCPOA were to fail on that basis, it would remove the unprecedented constraints on and monitoring of Iran's nuclear program, lead to the unraveling of the international sanctions regime against Iran, and deal a devastating blow to the credibility of America's leadership and our commitments to our closest allies.

I think that is a very powerful statement. I do know that Iran is in compliance. We have a very strict and strong monitoring program, and they are in compliance.

□ 1545

So the questions become: If indeed they are in compliance, why would we interfere with the plan? Why would we jeopardize this plan that has been worked on with our strong allies in an attempt to try and find another way to say that Iran must be scrutinized?

Everything in this plan has to do with discontinuing the development of nuclear capability. I think we should respect the work that we have done with our allies and discontinue all of these attempts to undermine the deal that we have entered in with and caused our allies to distrust us.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE), a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, and I thank Chairman HENSARLING and Representative POLIQUIN for their leadership on this issue.

We must be scrutinizing the financial dealings of senior Iranian political and military leaders. It is in the national security interest of the United States to understand the international web of finances that supports terror operations and other nefarious causes.

I am pleased that this bill includes an amendment I proposed to target the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, a position currently held by Ali Akbar Salehi, to the list of Iranian leaders named in this legislation.

Given Iran's violations of international law and its clear ties to international terrorism—it is, after all, the leading state sponsor of terrorism across the globe—we should be monitoring the finances of the head of its nuclear program to ensure compliance with sanctions and other laws.

For years, the Iranian regime has been mired in institutionalized corruption, to the detriment of the people of that great country. In the nexus of nuclear weapons, state-sponsored terrorism, money laundering, secret financial agreements, and mass pilfering from the Iranian people is cause for great alarm. This legislation is a response to all of that. It is completely bipartisan in nature. It is the way we should act in the House of Representatives in a bipartisan capacity. The national security interests of the United States know no partisan bounds.

Mr. Chairman, we need all of the tools at our disposal to investigate the finances of this terrorist regime.

I urge a ''yes'' vote on Mr. POLIQUIN's legislation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time I have remaining on my side?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 5¾ minutes.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes again to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN), the sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Chairman, I did want to respond to the gentlewoman from California and to other folks who are on the other side of this bill.

First of all, I think it is very clear to the world that the Iranian Government has been cheating on the nuclear deal almost since day one. I think it was within months, Mr. Chairman, that they test-fired both medium-range and long-range ballistic missiles, in violation of an 8-year ban on developing those conventional weapons.

So I think it is kind of silly for us to be debating here about a government that sponsors terrorism and vows to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth and kill as many Americans as they can, as a leadership regime that is going to abide by this agreement when they have proven they are not.

Second of all, as I have mentioned several times, my bill has nothing to do with this agreement. But, then again, someone on the other side of the aisle, Mr. Chairman, also said: Well, we think American officials, American leaders, should be responsible for disclosing that.

Well, here is the difference: America does not sponsor terrorism. The Iranian Government does.

That is exactly what we are trying to get at, Mr. Chairman. I am trying to understand what folks who will not support this bill are going to say when they go back home at Christmastime, when they had an opportunity to shed sunlight on the top political and military leaders in Iran who are ripping off the Iranian people and who are sponsoring terrorism, why it is a bad idea to make sure this information is public to the world as well as to the Iranian people. I would like to understand what they are going to say when they go back home and talk to their constituents.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for this opportunity. This is a terrific bill. It does something very common sense: put pressure through sunlight, through transparency, on the chief sponsor of terrorism in the world—the Iranian regime.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the information that is being shared by my colleague, Mr. POLIQUIN. I am going to yield more time to him to explain to me: The missiles that he is describing in Iran, that are not a part of the deal, of the plan, are they similar to the missiles that are being fired with nuclear warheads from North Korea.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I yield to the gentleman from Maine.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Chairman, can the gentlewoman repeat the question again? I didn't understand it.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I said: The missiles that he is referring to, that he is concerned about with Iran, that are not a part of the plan, are they similar to the ballistic missiles that are being fired from North Korea with nuclear warheads possibly on them?

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Chairman, the missiles that I was referring to are very clear to the gentlewoman from California. They deal specifically with the Iran nuclear deal, which is a dangerous deal for this world and for this country. It has nothing to do with any issue dealing with North Korea.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Are they more dangerous than the missiles from North Korea?

Mr. POLIQUIN. What difference does that have to do with the——

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I will tell Mr. POLIQUIN what difference it makes.

Here we are with threats from North Korea and the President of the United States unwilling to be involved with diplomacy, who, rather, would like to basically mimic and mock the leader of North Korea by calling him ''Little Rocket Man,'' and by telling the Secretary of State: Don't talk to him. It is no use to talk with him.

So here we have North Korea, who has already indicated that they have missiles that will reach us right here in the United States, anywhere in the United States, and Mr. POLIQUIN is telling me about his concern about missiles in Iran that are not a part of the nuclear deal.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I have no other speakers, and I believe I have the right to close.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California has 6 minutes remaining.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I include in the RECORD a statement from J Street that is in opposition to this legislation.

J STREET,
*December 12, 2017.*

MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: J Street urges Members to oppose H.R. 1638 and H.R. 4324, which would undermine or violate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear activities.

J Street again urges Members to oppose the ''Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act'' (H.R. 1638). As we noted in our statement opposing the bill when it was introduced last year, it risks harming the U.S. Government's ability to ensure Iranian and third party compliance with the agreement and to counter Iran's dangerous non-nuclear behavior by redirecting and tying up the very USG personnel and resources charged with those tasks.

J Street also urges Members to oppose the so-called ''Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act'' (H.R. 4324), which is clearly intended to lead to a U.S. violation of the JCPOA.

This bill would impose additional certification requirements on the administration in order to carry out current U.S. obligations related to commercial aircraft sales under the JCPOA. These new obligations require the administration to certify that Iran is not engaged in certain non-nuclear activity, or issue a national security waiver saying they'll allow the planes to be sold anyway. In other words, it imposes new, unilateral terms for continuation of the JCPOA that are unrelated to Iran's nuclear conduct.

It has been widely reported in connection with the president's recent refusal to make the necessary certification to Congress under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act that the president resents having to undertake official actions to keep the United States in compliance with the JCPOA. Proponents of this legislation clearly hope to make use of the president's apparent resistance to taking such steps by adding a new certification requirement that they hope he will also fail to meet—thereby blocking the sale of commercial aircraft and forcing a U.S. violation of the agreement.

Anyone doubting that this is the point of the bill need look no further than the first finding, which makes clear that this bill is a gratuitously anti-Obama, anti-JCPOA vehicle, and not a serious.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, I also include in the RECORD a Statement of Administration Policy from the previous Obama administration, which I read a paragraph from.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 5461—IRANIAN LEADERSHIP ASSET TRANSPARENCY ACT

The Administration shares the Congress' goals of increasing transparency and bringing Iran into compliance with international standards in the global fight against terror finance and money laundering. However, this bill would be counterproductive toward those shared goals.

The bill requires the U.S. Government to publicly report all assets held by some of Iran's highest leaders and to describe how these assets are acquired and used. Rather than preventing terrorist financing and money laundering, this bill would incentivize those involved to make their financial dealings less transparent and create a disincentive for Iran's banking sector to demonstrate transparency. These onerous reporting requirements also would take critical resources away from the U.S. Department of the Treasury's important work to identify Iranian entities engaged in sanctionable conduct. Producing this information could also compromise intelligence sources and methods.

One of our best tools for impeding destabilizing Iranian activities has been to identify Iranian companies that are controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) or other Iranians on the list of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN List) to non-U.S. businesses, so that they can block assets or stop material transfers. This process is labor-intensive and requires the judicious use of our national intelligence assets. Redirecting these assets to preparing this onerous public report would be counterproductive and will not reduce institutional corruption or promote transparency within Iran's system.

In addition, this bill's required public postings also may be perceived by Iran and likely our Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) partners as an attempt to undermine the fulfilment of our commitments, in turn impacting the continued viability of this diplomatic arrangement that peacefully and verifiably prevents Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. If the JCPOA were to fail on that basis, it would remove the unprecedented constraints on and monitoring of Iran's nuclear program, lead to the unraveling of the international sanctions regime against Iran, and deal a devastating blow to the credibility of America's leadership and our commitments to our closest allies.

As we address our concerns with Iran's nuclear program through implementation of the JCPOA, the Administration remains clear-eyed regarding Iran's support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, human rights abuses, and destabilizing activity in the region. The United States should retain all of the tools needed to counter this activity, ranging from powerful sanctions to our efforts to disrupt and interdict illicit shipments of weapons and proliferation-sensitive technologies. This bill would adversely affect the U.S. Government's ability to wield these tools, would undermine the very goals it purports to achieve, and could even endanger our ability to ensure that Iran's nuclear program is and remains exclusively peaceful.

If the President were presented with H.R. 5461, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto this bill.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Chairman, we are opposed to this bill not because we are not concerned about the security of our country and security of our allies in the Middle East. The Members on the opposite side of the aisle don't care any more than we care, but we respect when our leadership and our country gets involved and negotiates with another country, such as they have done with Iran, and they come to some agreements. We would like our country to live up to the agreement.

When we have included in that agreement a description of the monitoring that will be done, and when that monitoring is being carried out, and when it is represented to us by those that we have in charge of that monitoring that that country, Iran, is in compliance, we believe them. And when we trust our negotiators, when we trust our country, when we trust our leadership, and Iran is in compliance, there is no reason to try and undo the deal. There is no reason to come behind the agreement and what has been negotiated and begin to think of ways that they believe we ought to expand that agreement. We could, in the Congress of the United States, come up with a new idea every day. With all of the Members of this House, with all of the different thoughts and, possibly, ideas, and everybody thinking they are smarter than everybody else, we could come up with all kinds of plans to interfere with that agreement.

But I would advise the Members of this House and the Members on the opposite side of the aisle that they do not need to do this. This is a bad idea. I would advise them to put faith in the negotiations that have gone on and to accept the representations about compliance that we are being given. We are being assured that not only is the monitoring taking place, but Iran is in compliance.

So, again, I am so worried about our role in this country today and the fact that our leadership is being diminished day by day because of the way that our President and the White House is handling our relationships with other countries. As a matter of fact, we see a President that is endangering us and destroying relationships constantly.

I mention that we have in this deal Russia, China, Germany, England, and France. I asked the question: What are our allies in this agreement saying about our attempts to interfere with the agreement? Do they agree with them? Are they consulted? Are they unhappy about what is being done?

I suppose they could do the same in their countries every day. They could come up with new ways to interfere with the agreement. They could begin to ask questions about us and why we are doing what we are doing. They could even ask questions about why are we concerned about the assets of those who are not sanctionable when we are not concerned about the assets of our own President.

Mr. Chairman, this is Mr. POLIQUIN's bill. He wants to know about the assets of leaders in Iran.

Has he seen his President's tax returns? Does he know about his assets? Does he know about where they have come from? Does he know about how they are utilized?

I don't think so.

So I think it is very, very important for us to do everything that we can to have our allies trust us, to live up to the deals that we make, not to ask more of others than we are willing to do ourselves, no.

We are not sponsors of terrorism. We are a people who have always tried to avoid war. Unfortunately, we have engaged in it, and we know that it is not the best answer to trying to deal with the problems that we encounter around the world. I do believe that we honestly try to avoid war and that we work for peace.

This is working for peace, and peace in the Middle East is one of the most important goals that we should have. I see the opportunities for that eroding every day.

So I would ask Mr. POLIQUIN to think about what he is doing. I believe that his intentions are good, but I think it is a bad bill.

Mr. Chairman, I ask for a ''no'' vote on this bill. It is not needed. I think it creates problems with our allies, and they begin to wonder whether or not they can trust us. We are an honorable people and we are leaders in the world, even though it is being questioned more and more.

Mr. Chairman, I ask Members to vote ''no'' on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). The Chair reminds all Members to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Texas has 3¾ minutes remaining.

□ 1600

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I find it fascinating how often the ranking member criticized our own President and didn't have one critical comment for the President of Iran, the nation which our State Department, including the Obama State Department, has labeled as the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism. But yet, in the last almost hour we have not heard one single critical word.

We hear much about the JCPOA, the Iran nuclear deal, perhaps one of the worst arrangements, international agreements that has ever been entered into by our country, but look as I may, in the legislation—and it is 9 pages long, not 900—you will not see the JCPOA in it.

Mr. POLIQUIN's bill, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, is just that. It is seeking to have greater international transparency for the leaders of this rogue nation, regardless of the JCPOA.

Let's remember what the gentleman from Ohio reminded us, that it was because of information, including radio-free Europe, that went across the Iron Curtain that ultimately brought that curtain down and freed millions. We want to make sure the Iranian people know about their own leadership.

Our own State Department has said the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force along with Iranian partners, allies, and proxies continue to play a destabilizing role in military conflicts in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, but the ranking member says: Oh, let's not say anything about their leadership because we might hurt their feelings.

The State Department goes on to say: Iran continued to recruit fighters from across the region to join Iranian-affiliated Shia militia forces engaged in conflicts in Syria and Iraq and has even offered a path to citizenship for those who heed this call. And yet the ranking member says let's not report on the leadership of this rogue regime because they are very sensitive people.

The State Department goes on to say: Hezbollah continued to work closely with Iran in these conflict zones, playing a major role in supporting the Syrian Government's efforts to maintain control in the territory and providing training and a range of other support for Iranian-aligned groups in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Yet we continue to hear from the ranking member that we shouldn't learn anything about their leadership. Again, we might step on their toes after the JCPOA, and we wouldn't want to do that. We wouldn't want to be insensitive to international terrorists.

In 2016, Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, boasted: ''We are open about the fact that Hezbollah's budget, its income, its expenses, everything it eats and drinks, its weapons and rockets are from the Islamic Republican of Iran.''

I mean, how much more do we need to know? Why do we continue to have Members of the United States Congress come to the floor of this institution and somehow want to seemingly protect the leaders of this rogue regime?

We want to know more information. We want to disseminate this information. We want the whole world to know about the leadership of the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism. It is exactly what the gentleman from Maine is trying to. I salute him for his leadership.

I encourage all Members to vote ''aye'' for his bill.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services, printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the 5-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–47. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

H.R. 1638

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

***SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.***

*This Act may be cited as the ''Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act''.*

***SEC. 2. FINDINGS.***

*The Congress finds the following:*

*(1) Iran is characterized by high levels of official and institutional corruption, and substantial involvement by Iran's security forces, particularly the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), in the economy.*

*(2) Many members of Iran's senior political and military leadership have acquired significant personal and institutional wealth by using their positions to secure control of significant portions of Iran's national economy.*

*(3) Sanctions relief provided through the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action has resulted in the removal of many Iranian entities that are tied to governmental corruption from the list of entities sanctioned by the United States.*

*(4) The Department of Treasury in 2011 designated the Islamic Republic of Iran's financial sector as a jurisdiction of primary money laundering concern under section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act, stating ''Treasury has for the*

*first time identified the entire Iranian financial sector; including Iran's Central Bank, private Iranian banks, and branches, and subsidiaries of Iranian banks operating outside of Iran as posing illicit finance risks for the global financial system.''.*

*(5) Iran continues to be listed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) among the ''Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories''—countries which it perceived to be non-cooperative in the global fight against terror finance and money laundering.*

*(6) Iran and North Korea are the only countries listed by the FATF as ''Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories'' against which FATF countries should take measures.*

*(7) The Transparency International index of perceived public corruption ranks Iran 130th out of 168 countries surveyed.*

*(8) The State Department identified Iran as a ''major money-laundering country'' in its International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) for 2016.*

*(9) The State Department currently identifies Iran, along with Sudan and Syria, as a state sponsor of terrorism, ''having repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism''.*

*(10) The State Department's ''Country Reports on Terrorism'', published last in July 2017, noted that ''Iran continued to sponsor terrorist groups around the world, principally through its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps–Qods Force (IRGC–QF). These groups included Lebanese Hizballah, several Iraqi Shia militant groups, Hamas, and Palestine Islamic Jihad. Iran, Hizballah, and other Shia militia continued to provide support to the Asad regime, dramatically bolstering its capabilities, prolonging the civil war in Syria, and worsening the human rights and refugee crisis there.''.*

*(11) The Iranian Government's tolerance of corruption and nepotism in business limits opportunities for foreign and domestic investment, particularly given the significant involvement of the IRGC in many sectors of Iran's economy.*

*(12) The IRGC and the leadership-controlled bonyads (foundations) control an estimated one-third of Iran's total economy, including large portions of Iran's telecommunications, construction, and airport and port operations. These operations give the IRGC and bonyads vast funds to support terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas.*

*(13) By gaining control of major economic sectors, the IRGC and bonyads have also served to further disadvantage the average Iranian.*

***SEC. 3. REPORT REQUIREMENT RELATING TO ASSETS OF IRANIAN LEADERS AND CERTAIN SENIOR POLITICAL FIGURES.***

*(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter (or more frequently if the Secretary of the Treasury determines it appropriate based on new information received by the Secretary) for the following 2 years, the Secretary of the Treasury shall, in furtherance of the Secretary's efforts to prevent the financing of terrorism, money laundering, or related illicit finance and to make financial institutions' required compliance with remaining sanctions more easily understood, submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees containing—*

*(1) the estimated total funds or assets held in accounts at U.S. and foreign financial institutions that are under direct or indirect control by each natural person described in subsection (b) and a description of such assets;*

*(2) an identification of any equity stake such natural person has in an entity on the Department of the Treasury's list of Specially Designated Nationals or in any other sanctioned entity;*

*(3) a description of how such funds or assets or equity interests were acquired, and how they have been used or employed;*

*(4) a description of any new methods or techniques used to evade anti-money laundering and related laws, including recommendations to improve techniques to combat illicit uses of the U.S. financial system by each natural person described in subsection (b);*

*(5) recommendations for how U.S. economic sanctions against Iran may be revised to prevent the funds or assets described under this subsection from being used by the natural persons described in subsection (b) to contribute to the continued development, testing, and procurement of ballistic missile technology by Iran;*

*(6) a description of how the Department of the Treasury assesses the impact and effectiveness of U.S. economic sanctions programs against Iran; and*

*(7) recommendations for improving the ability of the Department of the Treasury to rapidly and effectively develop, implement, and enforce additional economic sanctions against Iran if so ordered by the President under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act or other corresponding legislation.*

*(b) PERSONS DESCRIBED.—The natural persons described in this subsection are the following:*

*(1) The Supreme Leader of Iran.*

*(2) The President of Iran.*

*(3) Members of the Council of Guardians.*

*(4) Members of the Expediency Council.*

*(5) The Minister of Intelligence and Security.*

*(6) The Commander and the Deputy Commander of the IRGC.*

*(7) The Commander and the Deputy Commander of the IRGC Ground Forces.*

*(8) The Commander and the Deputy Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force.*

*(9) The Commander and the Deputy Commander of the IRGC Navy.*

*(10) The Commander of the Basij-e-Mostaz'afin.*

*(11) The Commander of the Qods Force.*

*(12) The Commander in Chief of the Police Force.*

*(13) The head of the IRGC Joint Staff.*

*(14) The Commander of the IRGC Intelligence.*

*(15) The head of the IRGC Imam Hussein University.*

*(16) The Supreme Leader's Representative at the IRGC.*

*(17) The Chief Executive Officer and the Chairman of the IRGC Cooperative Foundation.*

*(18) The Commander of the Khatam-al-Anbia Construction Head Quarter.*

*(19) The Chief Executive Officer of the Basij Cooperative Foundation.*

*(20) The head of the Political Bureau of the IRGC.*

*(21) The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.*

*(c) FORM OF REPORT; PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—*

*(1) FORM.—The report required under subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.*

*(2) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The unclassified portion of such report shall be made available to the public and posted on the website of the Department of the Treasury—*

*(A) in English, Farsi, Arabic, and Azeri; and*

*(B) in precompressed, easily downloadable versions that are made available in all appropriate formats.*

*(d) SOURCES OF INFORMATION.—In preparing a report described under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury may use any credible publication, database, web-based resource, public information compiled by any government agency, and any information collected or compiled by a nongovernmental organization or other entity provided to or made available to the Secretary, that the Secretary finds credible.*

*(e) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:*

*(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means the Committees on Financial Services and Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and Foreign Relations of the Senate.*

*(2) FUNDS.—The term ''funds'' means—*

*(A) cash;*

*(B) equity;*

*(C) any other intangible asset whose value is derived from a contractual claim, including bank deposits, bonds, stocks, a security as defined in section 2(a) of the Securities Act of 1933 (15 U.S.C. 77b(a)), or a security or an equity security as defined in section 3(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78c(a)); and*

*(D) anything else that the Secretary determines appropriate.*

***SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.***

*It is the sense of Congress that in preparing the reports required under section 3, the Secretary of the Treasury should consider acquiring information from sources that—*

*(1) collect and, if necessary, translate high-veracity, official records; or*

*(2) provide search and analysis tools that enable law enforcement to have new insights into commercial and financial relationships.*

The Acting CHAIR. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in part A of House Report 115–463. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. SCHNEIDER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part A of House Report 115–463.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 5, line 23, strike ''to contribute to'' and all that follows through ''by Iran;'' on page 5, line 25 and insert the following: ''to contribute—''

(A) to the continued development, testing, and procurement of ballistic missile technology by Iran; and

(B) to human rights abuses.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 658, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this bipartisan amendment to H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act.

I would like to thank my colleague from Texas, Judge POE, for joining me in this effort.

Iran is a bad and dangerous actor in a volatile region of the world, which is why Congress has enacted sanctions in response to Tehran's dangerous ballistic missile program and support for terrorist proxy groups, including Hezbollah. We must hold senior Iranian leadership accountable for destabilizing actions in the region and around the world.

The legislation on the floor today is an effort to shine a light and focus our

efforts on assets held by top Iranian officials, including the Supreme Leader, members of the Council of Guardians, members of the Expediency Council, and high-ranking military leaders.

Specifically, the bill requires the Secretary of the Treasury to report to Congress information on the assets held by senior Iranian leaders. Included in this report are recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of U.S. sanctions to prevent these assets and funding from being used by Iranian officials to further develop Iran's ballistic missile program.

My amendment simply, but importantly, expands this requirement to include Iran's human rights abuses. We should be using every tool in our toolbox to make clear to Iran that its human rights abuses are unacceptable.

The human rights situation in Iran is appalling, and abuses permeate many aspects of Iranian society. In Iran, repression and persecution of members of different religious faiths, including Sunni Muslims, Christians, and Baha'is is pervasive. The State Department's International Religious Freedom Report of 2016 cites at least 103 members of minority religious groups imprisoned for their religious activities. Since 1979, Iran has executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders and, over the past 10 years, has conducted more than 850 arbitrary arrests of Baha'i individuals.

Sexual orientation and gender identity are not protected categories from discrimination under Iranian law, and same-sex acts are punishable by flogging and possibly even death.

Arbitrary and unlawful killings are numerous. The State Department's annual Human Rights Report says the Iranian Government announced 114 executions by August of 2016 and that unofficial reports suggest a total of 469 executions by the end of that year. The U.N. puts this number even higher at 530 executions in 2016.

Freedom of speech is limited, media is censored, and publications have been banned and closed by the government. Harassment and detainment of journalists continue, and Iran's citizens are not allowed to criticize the government, Supreme Leader, or official religion.

The electoral system in Iran is neither free nor fair. In 2016, 79 percent of the candidates running for the Assembly of Experts and 58 percent running for the Islamic Consultative Assembly were disqualified by the Guardian Council.

And we cannot forget about the Americans and other foreigners who Iran has unjustly detained and continues to hold on fabricated charges, including the following individuals whose family members testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee earlier this year: Baquer and Siamak Namazi, Nizar Zakka, and, of course, Robert Levinson, who has been held for more than 10 years.

These are just a handful of examples of egregious human rights abuses by the Iranian Government. This amendment helps ensure that funds held by senior Iranian leaders do not contribute to these human rights abuses and that U.S. sanctions are best positioned to improve Iran's human rights situation.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting this important amendment.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Chair, I claim time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not opposed.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I thank Mr. SCHNEIDER for bringing this amendment. I am glad to be a cosponsor of the amendment.

Mr. Chair, the Iranians are a serious threat to the world, to international security. Iran's foreign policy is very clear. The Ayatollah has said it numerous times and continues to say that the foreign policy of Iran is: First, destroy Israel; second, destroy the United States. They have never wavered on this goal, and they are doing everything they can militarily to eventually try to reach those two goals.

But the greatest victims of the mullah's regime in Tehran are the people of Iran. They have been held hostage by the Supreme Leader who obviously cares more about ballistic missiles and international terrorism than taking care of the livelihood of the people who live under this regime.

The regime has become a notorious international leader in suppression, execution, torture, and inhumanity. The world knows about what is taking place in Iran, and the good people of Iran have no political space for expression or dissent. If they decide to dissent from the actions of the Ayatollah, well, it is off to jail or they are hung in the public square. We saw what the regime did to the protesters of the Green Movement in 2009.

Despite what some people still try to say, the current government is not seeking any sort of moderation. Over 3,000 executions have taken place under the regime's so-called President Rouhani. Scores of human rights defenders and political activists are still in prison or under House arrest, and they haven't been charged with anything and, of course, they haven't been tried.

The United States needs to prioritize elevating the voices of the Iranian people who are persecuted under oppression by this regime. These Iranians really represent the best of the Iranian civilization, and they are going to be the future of Iran.

We should take note of what is happening to them. It should be the U.S. foreign policy to focus significant attention on the serious human rights violations taking place in Iran.

I am happy to support and join Mr. SCHNEIDER in this amendment which will require the Treasury Department to issue recommendations as to how we can better prevent the mullahs from continuing the violent assault on human rights of the Iranian people. The United States must be at the forefront of this battle for human rights and decency for the Iranian people.

We must call out the Ayatollah and the mullahs for what they are doing. They are persecuting, violating human rights of the Iranian people. The Iranian regime is the number one state sponsor of world terror, and it also rains down terror on its own people. We need to put the squeeze on them even if it hurts their little feelings.

I urge support of this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague, Judge POE, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman once again for bringing this amendment to the floor. I gladly support it.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MS. MENG

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part A of House Report 115–463.

Ms. MENG. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 6, line 3, strike ''and'' at the end.

Page 6, after line 3, insert the following new paragraph (and redesignate the subsequent paragraph accordingly):

(7) an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of U.S. economic sanctions programs against Iran; and

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 658, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MENG) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. MENG. Mr. Chair, I rise today to offer an amendment that I think every Member of this body can support, no matter how they intend to vote on final passage of H.R. 1638.

This amendment simply seeks to insert a single new requirement into the report required by H.R. 1638, and that new requirement is as follows: ''an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of U.S. economic sanctions programs against Iran.''

□ 1615

Whether you voted for the Iran deal or against it, or whether you think economic sanctions are an effective diplomatic tool or something that sounds better than it is, I hope Members will support this amendment.

We should make evidence-based policy decisions in this body, whenever

possible, and, toward that end, we should know whether or not the sanctions that we pass here work.

If we are going to require a new report from the Treasury in this bill, and that report must include ''a description of how Treasury assesses the impact and effectiveness of U.S. economic sanctions programs against Iran,'' I think it is only appropriate to ask for the assessment itself; and that is what this amendment does.

Let me put it another way. Understanding how we count votes in America is important, but at the end of an election, I want to know the final tally. Who won? Who lost? What did we learn?

Similarly, I think it is important that if the Treasury is going to have to produce a new report on sanctions against Iran pursuant to H.R. 1638, that we understand exactly how the Treasury intends to assess the impact and effectiveness of those sanctions.

Even more importantly, though, I think this report should include the results of that assessment, particularly when it comes to sanctions we have authorized. That is all this amendment seeks to require, and I hope everyone in this body will support it.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York for her amendment. I note that she was a supporter of H.R. 5461, a nearly identical bill that passed the House in the last Congress. I think that her amendment is a valuable addition to H.R. 1638. Indeed, we should always know the effectiveness of the programs that we promote. In this case, we do need to understand how effective economic sanctions may be. So I appreciate her leadership.

Mr. Chairman, I would urge all Members to vote ''aye'' on the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MENG. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MENG).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas) having assumed the chair, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1638) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 658, he reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment to the amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole?

If not, the question is on the amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended.

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

## RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1647

## AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WESTERMAN) at 4 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 657;

Adoption of House Resolution 657, if ordered; and

Passage of H.R. 1638.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

## PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2396, PRIVACY NOTIFICATION TECHNICAL CLARIFICATION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4015, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REFORM AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 657) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2396) to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to update the exception for certain annual notices provided by financial institutions, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4015) to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 236, nays 187, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 678]

YEAS—236

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman

Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—187

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—8

Bridenstine
Kennedy
McCollum
Nolan
Pocan
Sensenbrenner
Visclosky
Walz

□ 1711

Mr. LYNCH changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 240, noes 184, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 679]

AYES—240

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Clay
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Newhouse
Noem
Norman
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—184

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gomez
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—7

Bridenstine
Kaptur
Kennedy
Pocan
Sensenbrenner
Visclosky
Walz

□ 1719

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## IRANIAN LEADERSHIP ASSET TRANSPARENCY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on passage of the bill (H.R. 1638) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a

report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 289, nays 135, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 680]

YEAS—289

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bera
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (TX)
Brat
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Curtis
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Dunn
Emmer
Engel
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
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Gianforte
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gomez
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Handel
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huizenga
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kihuen
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawson (FL)
Lewis (MN)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Norman
Nunes
O'Halleran
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
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Panetta
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Pearce
Perry
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Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Quigley
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sessions
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Soto
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
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Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—135

Adams
Bass
Beatty
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (TN)
Ellison
Eshoo
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Khanna
Kildee
Kilmer
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Pingree
Polis
Price (NC)
Raskin
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tonko
Tsongas
Veasey
Velázquez
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—7

Bridenstine
Kennedy
Pocan
Sensenbrenner
Torres
Visclosky
Walz

□ 1726

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, due to severe illness, I missed today's vote series. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 676, "yea" on rollcall No. 677, "yea" on rollcall No. 678, "yea" on rollcall No. 679, and "yea" on rollcall No. 680.

## STRENGTHENING OVERSIGHT OF IRAN'S ACCESS TO FINANCE ACT

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 658, I call up the bill (H.R. 4324) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 658, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–48 is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 4324

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

***SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.***

*This Act may be cited as the ''Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act''.*

***SEC. 2. FINDINGS.***

*The Congress finds the following:*

*(1) Under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), informally known as the Iran nuclear deal, the Obama administration agreed to license the sale of commercial passenger aircraft to Iran, the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism and a jurisdiction of primary money laundering concern.*

*(2) In April 2015, prior to the adoption of the JCPOA, Secretary of the Treasury Jacob Lew, in publicly advocating for its provisions, stated: ''Make no mistake: deal or no deal, we will continue to use all our available tools, including sanctions, to counter Iran's menacing behavior. Iran knows that our host of sanctions focused on its support for terrorism and its violations of human rights are not, and have never been, up for discussion.''.*

*(3) In March 2016 remarks to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Secretary Lew, in reference to U.S. commitments under the JCPOA, stated: ''While we have lifted the nuclear sanctions, we continue to enforce sanctions directed at support for terrorism and regional destabilization, and missile and human rights violations.''.*

*(4) In an April 2016 forum at the Council on Foreign Relations, Secretary Lew stated that, under the JCPOA, the U.S. committed to lifting its nuclear sanctions, ''but the U.S. financial system is not open to Iran, and that is not something that is going to change''.*

*(5) In September 2016, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) issued licenses permitting the export of up to 97 aircraft for use by Iran Air, the Islamic Republic of Iran's flagship state-owned carrier. These licenses included authorization for U.S. financial institutions ''to engage in all transactions necessary to provide financing or other financial services'' in order to effectuate the sales. In November 2016, OFAC licensed an additional 106 aircraft for purchase by Iran Air, which are also eligible for financing authorized by OFAC.*

*(6) The Department of the Treasury had sanctioned Iran Air in 2011 for its use of commercial passenger aircraft to transport rockets, missiles, and other military cargo on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Iran's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics, both of which had been designated under Executive Order 13382 for weapons proliferation-related activities. In October 2017, the IRGC went on to be designated under Executive Order 13224 for its support of the IRGC-Qods*

*Force, which has provided support to terrorist groups such as Hizballah, Hamas, and the Taliban.*

*(7) Among Iran Air's sanctionable activities, the airline delivered missile or rocket components to the Assad government in Syria, which like Iran is classified as a state sponsor of terrorism.*

*(8) The Assad regime is responsible for a civil conflict that has claimed an estimated 400,000 lives, including through the government's deployment of chemical weapons and barrel bombs against unarmed civilians and children.*

*(9) Despite being delisted in 2016, Iran Air has continued to fly known weapons resupply routes to government-controlled areas of Syria. According to research by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, between Implementation Day of the JCPOA on January 16, 2016, and May 4, 2017, Iran Air operated at least 134 flights to Syria, which included stops in Abadan, Iran, a suspected IRGC logistical hub for airlifts to the Assad regime.*

*(10) In November 2016 correspondence to the Chairman of the House Committee on Financial Services, the Department of the Treasury noted that the commitment to delist Iran Air under the JCPOA ''does not affect our ability to designate, or re-designate, any Iranian airline that engages in sanctionable activity. The United States retains the ability to designate any individual or entity that engages in sanctionable activities under our authorities targeting conduct outside the scope of the JCPOA, including Iran's support for terrorism, human rights abuses, ballistic missile program, and other destabilizing activities in the region.''.*

*(11) In April 2017, Iran announced a deal for Aseman Airlines to purchase up to 60 commercial aircraft, a transaction that would require authorization by OFAC. Aseman Airlines' chief executive officer, Hossein Alaei, has for decades served as a senior member of the IRGC.*

***SEC. 3. CERTIFICATIONS FOR AIRCRAFT-RELATED TRANSACTIONS BY UNITED STATES AND FOREIGN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.***

*(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after authorizing a transaction by a United States or foreign financial institution in connection with the export or re-export of a commercial passenger aircraft to Iran (or, for an authorization made after January 16, 2016, but before the date of the enactment of this Act, not later than 60 days after such date of enactment), and every 180 days thereafter for the duration of the authorization, the Secretary of the Treasury shall submit the report described under subsection (b) to the appropriate congressional committees.*

*(b) REPORT WITH RESPECT TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS' IRAN-RELATED TRANSACTIONS AND DUE DILIGENCE.—With respect to a financial institution and a transaction described under subsection (a), a report is described under this subsection if it contains—*

*(1) a list of financial institutions that, since January 16, 2016, have conducted transactions authorized by the Secretary in connection with the export or re-export of commercial passenger aircraft to Iran;*

*(2) either—*

*(A) a certification that—*

*(i) the transaction does not pose a significant money laundering or terrorism financing risk to the United States financial system;*

*(ii) the transaction will not benefit an Iranian person that, since the date that is one year preceding the date of the certification—*

*(I) has knowingly transported items used for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including systems designed in whole or in part for the delivery of such weapons; or*

*(II) has knowingly provided transportation services or material support for, or on behalf of, any person designated under Executive Orders 13224, 13382, or 13572; and*

*(iii) any financial institution described under subsection (b)(1) has had since the date such authorization was made, or, if the authorization is no longer in effect, had for the duration of such authorization, appropriate policies, procedures, and processes in place to avoid engaging in sanctionable activities that may result from the financial institutions' exposure to Iran; or*

*(B) a statement that the Secretary is unable to make the certification described under subparagraph (A) and a notice that the Secretary will, not later than 60 days after the date the determination is submitted to the appropriate congressional committees, issue a report on non-certification described under subsection (c) to the appropriate congressional committees.*

*(c) REPORT ON NON-CERTIFICATION.—With respect to a financial institution and a transaction described under subsection (a), a report on non-certification is described under this subsection if it contains—*

*(1) a detailed explanation for why the Secretary is unable to make the certification described under subsection (b)(2);*

*(2) a notification of whether the Secretary will—*

*(A) not amend the authorization of the transaction with respect to a financial institution, notwithstanding such non-certification;*

*(B) suspend the authorization until the Secretary is able to make such certification;*

*(C) revoke the authorization; or*

*(D) otherwise amend the authorization; and*

*(3) an explanation of the reasons for any action to be taken described under paragraph (2).*

*(d) WAIVER.—The President may waive, on a case-by-case basis, the provisions of this Act for up to one year at a time upon certifying to the appropriate congressional committees that—*

*(1) the Government of Iran has—*

*(A) made substantial progress towards combating money laundering and terrorism financing risk emanating from Iran; or*

*(B) has significantly reduced Iran's—*

*(i) destabilizing activities in the region; or*

*(ii) material support for terrorist groups; or*

*(2) such waiver is important to the national security interests of the United States, with an explanation of the reasons therefor.*

*(e) TERMINATION.—This section shall cease to be effective on the date that is 30 days after the date on which the President certifies to the appropriate congressional committees that—*

*(1)(A) the Secretary does not find, under section 5318A of title 31, United States Code, that reasonable grounds exist for concluding that Iran is a jurisdiction of primary money laundering concern; and*

*(B) Iran has ceased providing support for acts of international terrorism; or*

*(2) terminating the provisions of this section is vital to the national security interests of the United States, with an explanation of the reasons therefor.*

*(f) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:*

*(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term ''appropriate congressional committees'' means the committees on Financial Services and Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the committees on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and Foreign Relations of the Senate.*

*(2) FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term ''financial institution'' means a United States financial institution or a foreign financial institution.*

*(3) FOREIGN FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term ''foreign financial institution'' has the meaning given that term under section 561.308 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations.*

*(4) KNOWINGLY.—The term ''knowingly'', with respect to conduct, a circumstance, or a result, means that a person has actual knowledge, or should have known, of the conduct, the circumstance, or the result.*

*(5) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Treasury.*

*(6) UNITED STATES FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term ''United States financial institution'' has the meaning given the term ''U.S. financial institution'' under section 561.309 of title 31, Code of Federal Regulations.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services.

After 1 hour of debate, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in part B of House Report 115–463, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered read, shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

□ 1730

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and submit extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 4324, which is a commonsense piece of legislation sponsored by my good friend and fellow Texan, Mr. WILLIAMS. His work as a member of the Financial Services Committee and as vice chairman of the Monetary Policy and Trade Subcommittee has been invaluable.

Mr. Speaker, as our colleagues know, under the Iran nuclear bill, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, the Obama administration committed the U.S. to license the sale of aircraft to Iran.

In addition to authorizing the sales, these licenses have authorized banks to engage in financing, even though Iran remains classified by the Treasury Department as a jurisdiction of primary money laundering concern. On top of that, the State Department continues to label Iran as the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism.

The recipient of these aircraft would be Iran Air, the state-owned airline that was sanctioned as recently as 2011 for supporting the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which itself has been designated by the Trump administration as a terrorist organization. So, Mr. Speaker, so far, so bad.

And yet, while I and many of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle find these aircraft sales and their financing deeply disturbing, Mr. WILLIAMS' bill is about something far, far simpler. All

his bill would do is bring about the implications of the aircraft finance for Iran out into the sunlight. In other words, Mr. Speaker, it is a reporting requirement—nothing more, nothing less.

It would simply require Treasury to help Congress understand who is involved in these transactions. If it is an airline, has that airline stopped supporting terrorists or other sanctioned persons. If it is a bank, does that bank have the due diligence in place to guard against the immense illicit finance risk endemic to Iran.

All this legislation does is have Treasury certify this information for Congress. And, if Treasury can't make those certifications, it simply has to notify us what plans it has in response, even if it has no plans in response.

So, when we hear today from the other side of the aisle how this bill may impose new conditions on Iran or somehow stand in the way of commitments under the JCPOA, I suggest, again, everyone read the bill. It is simple. It is common sense. In fact, we should be considering this under the expedited process of the suspension calendar.

This legislation provides, again, for a simple reporting requirement, Mr. Speaker; that is it, a reporting requirement.

If my friends who oppose this bill don't care enough to even request the information from the executive branch, especially information that may reveal the use of their constituents' bank deposits for the benefit of enablers of terrorism, well, Mr. Speaker, that is a sad, sad day for congressional oversight and a sad day for the United States Congress.

But there are people who have read the bill, if everybody in this institution hasn't, people, for example, associated with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, who wrote recently in a November 22 policy brief for the Foundation's Center on Sanctions and Illicit Finance: ''The proposed bill supports Treasury's robust licensing approval process by codifying steps that are likely already central to the Department's evaluation process.''

They go on to write, Mr. Speaker: ''While not imposing any new standards for the approval of sales to Iran, codifying the existing standards in law through this bill makes the licensing process more transparent and gives the American people—through their elected representatives—a clear picture of a significant component of the sanctions relief provided to Iran under the nuclear agreement.''

Mr. Speaker, I include this report in the RECORD.

[From the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Nov. 22, 2017]

CONGRESS SUPPORTS FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY FOR IRANIAN TRANSACTIONS

(By Annie Fixler, Tyler Stapleton)

The House Financial Services Committee approved last week the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act, which codifies in law a set of conditions that the U.S. Treasury must use to evaluate licenses for the sale of commercial aircraft to Iran.

The bill requires the secretary of the Treasury to report within 30 days whether transactions related to the export and re-export of aircraft to Iran pose a ''significant money laundering or terrorism financing risk to the United States financial system.'' The secretary must also determine whether the transactions benefit any Iranian person that has knowingly transported or otherwise supported the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or provided material support to persons included on Treasury's sanctions lists. If the secretary cannot certify that the transaction meets these conditions, he must explain whether the licenses authorizing the transaction will be revoked, modified, or remain valid despite the potential for illicit transactions or benefits going to sanctioned persons.

Under the July 2015 nuclear agreement known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, the United States committed to allowing the sale of commercial aircraft to Iran provided the planes are used ''exclusively for commercial passenger aviation.'' The JCPOA specifically states that if aircraft are either used for a prohibited purpose or transferred or re-sold to individuals or entities on Washington's sanctions lists, the U.S. would view this as grounds to cease its approval of aircraft sales—but, by implication, not abrogate the nuclear deal in full.

Upon the implementation of the JCPOA in January 2016, Treasury issued a Statement of Licensing Policy (SLP) and additional guidance reiterating and expanding on the relevant language from the nuclear deal. The SLP and related guidance indicate that Treasury would view license applications favorably but would review applications on a case-by-case basis and ''include appropriate conditions to ensure'' that no sanctioned persons were involved in the transaction.

The SLP and related guidance are clearly consistent with the JCPOA, which does not require the United States to issue licenses for aircraft sales without conditions. Accordingly, the SLP does not guarantee that all applications will be approved. If Washington determines that certain criteria are necessary in order to ensure that commercial aircraft are used appropriately, it is permitted to reject an application that does not meet those criteria.

The proposed bill supports Treasury's robust licensing approval process by codifying steps that are likely already central to the department's evaluation process. First, for more than two decades, Treasury has been at the forefront of efforts to implement global anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing standards. The bill emphasizes that these standards should be a critical component in the evaluation of licenses vis-à-vis Iranian aircraft transactions. Second, the bill's requirement that no persons knowingly supporting proliferation benefit from the deal mirrors Treasury's statement that no persons on sanctions lists be involved in the transactions.

While not imposing any new standards for the approval of sales to Iran, codifying the existing standards in law through this bill makes the licensing process more transparent and gives the American people—through their elected representatives—a clearer picture of a significant component of the sanctions relief provided to Iran under the nuclear agreement.

The most novel component of the bill is that it requires the secretary of the Treasury to issue a report listing all U.S. or foreign financial institutions that have conducted authorized transactions in connection with the export or re-export of commercial aircraft to Iran. While not classified, this information is not currently part of the public record. Objections to the publication of a list of companies and banks involved in aircraft sales revolve around exposing businesses to reputational risks for transacting with Iran. Yet it is unavoidable for there to be reputational risk for doing business—even legal business—with the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism.

Mr. HENSARLING. In closing, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman, my fellow Texan, has given all Members an opportunity, no matter what their views on the JCPOA, the Iran nuclear deal, to simply support transparency and Congress' right to basic information. I hope that my colleagues will seize that opportunity.

And, again, I thank Mr. WILLIAMS from Texas for his leadership and his excellent work.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES), a senior member of the Financial Services Committee and the Intelligence Committee.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully disagree with the chairman of the Financial Services Committee. This is not simply the gathering of information. This is not simply oversight.

Under H.R. 4324, a condition would be imposed on the sale of commercial aircraft to Iran. The Iran nuclear deal was very clear. It is broadly committed to ''allow for the sale of commercial passenger aircraft and related parts and services to Iran.'' The only condition on the U.S. commitment is that ''licensed items and services be used exclusively for commercial passenger aviation.''

H.R. 4324 would impose a new condition, a new condition which would require certification by the Secretary of State and all of the process that would ensue.

It is not a stretch—in fact, it is fairly clear—that if H.R. 4324 were to pass, the Iranians and others could credibly claim that we have violated our obligations under the JCPOA. Now, nobody should be surprised by that.

Despite the advice of his National Security Advisor, despite the advice of the Secretary of Defense, despite the advice of pretty much everyone around him, President Trump chose not to recertify Iranian compliance with the Iran nuclear deal.

We have seen bill after bill, including the bill just voted on, attempting to reverse the Iran nuclear deal, and we have heard this since this deal first came to the floor.

Let's reflect for one second on what the implications are:

This bill puts the Iran nuclear deal at risk. It arguably takes American aircraft manufacturers out of competition for lucrative contracts. My colleague from Washington will address this shortly.

I don't understand how putting American jobs at risk and taking American manufacturers out of contention in favor of companies like Airbus is about keeping America great again. I don't understand why, when we focus on jobs, this should be an action we should take.

However, I will say something, and I speak as a member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Prior to the passage of the Iran nuclear deal, it is not an exaggeration to say I didn't worry every night in a way that we worry today about North Korea. I went to bed every night thinking about Iranian centrifuges spinning, about military technology being created that could ultimately deliver a nuclear weapon to Israel or to Europe or to the United States, and our intelligence community believed that we were 2 to 3 months away from an Iranian nuclear weapon, kind of where we are today on North Korea.

I suspect everybody in this Chamber doesn't want to be where we are on North Korea with another state, with Iran.

I understand the skepticism on Iran, and I agree with everything that the chairman said with respect to Iran being a state sponsor of terrorism, with Iran being a location of money laundering, and I could go on, with Iran being an absolutely appalling regime.

But I speak as a member of the Intelligence Committee for a lot of people in this room when I say that, for the first time in a long time subsequent to the passage of the Iran deal, whatever you think of Iran—and not many of us think much of Iran—we don't go to bed every single night worrying about the possibility of waking up to a nuclear-weaponized Iran.

Why would we put that at risk?

I agree with the chairman that transparency is important, and I agree with everybody that Iran needs to be watched very, very skeptically. But why would we want to be with Iran exactly where we are today with North Korea?

Is this effort, which, in my opinion, is simply a continuation of the efforts to end the Iran deal, to reverse President Obama's legacy, is it worth going to bed at night not just worried about North Korea, but worried about Iran? I would suggest that it is not.

I don't want to go back to the pre-Iran deal era when I became an expert on centrifuges, on Uranium-235, on hardened bunkers and the weaponry that we produced to penetrate hardened bunkers and to the realization that, if we had to go to war against Iran to prevent a nuclear Iran, the consequences would be as awful as if we went to war with North Korea to prevent a North Korea nuclear-weaponized state.

Why would we do this? Why would we put at risk a deal that has given comfort to a lot of us for some period of time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, this deal is not a perfect deal. I don't know that there are perfect deals in this realm. But I do know that, for the next 7, 8, or 9 years, we are not going to have the worry that so many of us had before the Iran deal.

Let's engage on that. Let's figure out what comes behind the Iran deal. Let's figure out other ways to address the behavior of Iran with respect to terrorism and the money laundering. Let's remember that this deal was about removing the existential threat, not making Iran a perfect regime, but removing the existential threat to the United States of America, and let's not put that deal at risk.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member, and I urge a strong ''no'' vote against this legislation.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS), my friend, the sponsor of this legislation, and a great member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, it is truly a privilege to speak in support of my bill, H.R. 4324, the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4324 will improve congressional oversight of any financing that Treasury authorizes for aircraft sales to Iran.

Every 6 months, Treasury would need to certify to us that finance authorizations would not benefit an Iranian person who is transporting items for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction nor providing transportation for sanctioned entities. Treasury would also have to certify to us that those authorizations don't pose a significant money laundering or terrorism finance risk to the U.S. financial system, and that any banks engaging in this business have appropriate due diligence procedures in place. If the Treasury Department cannot make this certification, the Department must tell us why, and it must explain to Congress the course of action it intends to take.

I note that my bill was reported out of the Financial Services Committee last month by a vote of 38–21, with five of my Democratic colleagues voting in its favor.

□ 1745

Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will label this bill as a simple attempt to dismantle the Obama administration's Iran nuclear deal. We have already heard it.

Mr. Speaker, this debate is not about U.S. commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. It is not about reimposing nuclear sanctions. It is not about prohibiting these aircraft sales or the financing of these sales.

What this legislation is about is providing Congress with information on the implications of these deals so that we can better understand their impact on the integrity of our financial system.

I would like to take a step back and discuss how we got to this point and why this legislation is necessary. As most of you know, under the JCPOA, the Obama administration committed the United States to license the sale of commercial aircraft to Iran. In addition to providing licenses for aircraft sales, the licenses also allowed for banks to engage in the financing of these aircraft.

All of this was permitted, despite the fact that Iran remained classified as a jurisdiction to primary money laundering concern by the Treasury Department and as the world's foremost state sponsor of terror by the State Department.

Let us be abundantly clear on the facts. It was the Obama Treasury Department that highlighted the role that Iran and Iranian aircraft played in the destabilizing activity across the Middle East and in supporting the atrocities committed by the rogue Assad regime in Syria.

On September 9, 2012, David S. Cohen, the Treasury Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence under President Obama, released the following statement:

''The identification of Iranian aircraft also further highlights Iran's ongoing effort to support the Assad regime's weapons of mass destruction programs and crackdown against the Syrian people.''

This quote followed the Treasury Department's announcement to impose sanctions against entities that support the Assad regime in Syria.

So quoting from the same September 9, 2012, Treasury statement: ''As a result of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act, foreign financial institutions that knowingly engage in significant transactions with . . . Iran Air, Mahan Air, or Yas Air, including any of 117 aircraft operated by these airlines, risk losing access to the U.S. banking system.''

Mr. Speaker, this week I received a memo from the National Iranian American Council urging members to oppose my bill. This is the same council that opposes President Trump's travel ban, which was recently upheld by a Supreme Court decision of 7–2, and the same organization that took concern with new sanctions imposed on Iran's support for Hezbollah.

This memo and the pro-Iran principles that it represents could not be a better endorsement for the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act.

I would ask this to my colleagues on both sides: At what point did we relegate ourselves to negotiating with those who wish us harm? At what point did we prioritize the interest of a rogue government that paints their bombs with sayings like ''Death to Israel'' and ''Death to America''? When did that happen?

There are simply two sides to this issue. You can either protect the interests of the United States, her citizens, and the U.S. financial institutions, or you can make important the wishes of the Ayatollah and his revolutionary guard.

Which side do you choose to be on? That is the question.

I represent the red, white, and blue.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. WILLIAMS. My commitment to the safety and well-being of these United States is unwavering.

I urge my colleagues to do the same: support the red, white, and blue, and support H.R. 4324.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4324, the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act, would impose a new and unilateral certification requirement on the administration in order to meet current U.S. obligations under the Iran nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, with respect to the sale and financing of commercial passenger aircraft to Iran.

This certification requirement would call for the Treasury Secretary to consider factors that fall well outside the scope of the nuclear deal and beyond the specific conditions that the U.S. is allowed to place on the license of commercial aircraft to Iran under the nuclear accord.

By moving the goal posts on our commitments under the deal, H.R. 4324 clearly aims to force the United States into a violation of the agreement. Under the Iran nuclear deal, the United States is broadly committed to allow for the sale of commercial passenger aircraft and related parts and services to Iran. This involves licensing the sale of aircraft and related parts and services to Iran, including the financing for such sales.

Under the JCPOA Annex II, the only condition on the U.S. commitment is that licensed items and services must be used exclusively for commercial passenger aviation. Moreover, the only allowable conditions the U.S. can place on authorizations for the sale of commercial passenger aircraft to Iran apply to the licensed aircraft themselves and the use of such licensed aircraft, not on activities or services provided that have no relationship to the licensed aircraft or related goods or services.

Yet, H.R. 4324 would impose new conditions on the licensed sale of aircraft to Iran, including, notably, the condition that the recipient airline has not used nonlicensed aircraft for purposes other than commercial passenger aviation. That is, under this bill, the administration would have to certify that Iran is not engaged in certain activity unrelated to Iran's nuclear conduct but also unrelated to the use of the aircraft itself. If the Treasury Secretary is unable to make such a difficult certification, the Secretary must then report to Congress as to whether the Secretary intends to suspend, revoke, amend, or approve, notwithstanding such noncertification, any license facilitating the sale of commercial aircraft to Iran.

Supporters of the bill will likely note that the bill will not require the Secretary of the Treasury to suspend or revoke an authorization in the event that the Secretary is unable to make the necessary certification, but the obvious political conclusion is that the Secretary will be forced to revoke such license if the Secretary is unwilling to make the certification.

As we have now seen, the President detests the fact that his administration has to take affirmative steps to keep the deal in place, and he refused to do so. In the case of the last recurring 90-day congressional certification requirement, proponents of this bill undoubtedly hope Trump will react the same way to these additional certifications and block the sale of commercial aircraft, which is a key element of the deal.

In a break from reason and logic, this legislation plays directly into the hands of the President, who is desperate to find any pretext to say that Iran is in violation of the deal or to force Iran to walk away, and thereby, avoid having to take the blame for pulling the plug on the deal.

But let me be clear. By seeking to render impermissible that which is expressly permitted by the JCPOA, the legislation is clearly intended to undermine the nuclear agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR), the chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act introduced by my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS).

Since the seizure of the U.S. Embassy and the taking of 66 American hostages during the 1979 revolution, Iran has taken a long view on its global ambition, supporting terrorist proxies like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis in Yemen.

From 1983, when Iran-supported Hezbollah bombed a U.S. Marines barracks in Lebanon, killing 243 servicemembers, to the killing of over 500 soldiers in Iraq by the elite Quds Force leader, Qasem Soleimani, Iran has earned its reputation as the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism.

Most recently, Iran Air, an Iranian state-owned airline, was sanctioned by the Treasury Department in 2011 for using its commercial passenger aircraft to transport weapons to terrorists helping the Assad regime in Syria and for transporting military cargo to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. This is in addition to what the world already well knows, that the Iranian regime has covered up and lied about its nuclear program for decades, deceiving international inspectors, agreeing to intrusive inspections, and then allowing those inspections to be implemented only provisionally and selectively.

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, regularly chants ''Death to America'' and ultimately calls for the annihilation of the Jewish people.

In 2015, the Obama administration made a historic mistake by agreeing to the ill-conceived Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or as it is also called, the Iran nuclear agreement or JCPOA. The agreement removed financial sanctions on Iran, enabling greater financial resources for Iranian-funded terrorism.

Adding insult to injury, later, in 2016, due to the agreement, the Obama Treasury Department authorized the sale of more than 200 planes to Iran, the same Iranian airline that was sanctioned in 2011, and the Department also authorized U.S. banks to finance these transactions. But there is evidence that the carrier has continued its illicit behavior.

According to an April 2017 hearing in our subcommittee, Dr. Emanuele Ottolenghi, a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, testified that Iran Air operated at least 114 flights to Syria between January 16, 2016, which was Implementation Day of the JCPOA, and March 30, 2017. These flights are known as weapons resupply routes and stopovers in Iran with a suspected IRGC logistical hub that supports airlifts to the Assad regime.

In communications with the committee, Dr. Ottolenghi later confirmed that Iran Air had run at least 134 such flights between Implementation Day and May 4, 2017, which means the Iran nuclear agreement facilitated Iran helping the brutal murderous regime of Assad.

In exchange, what did the United States get out of this?

Only managed access to suspect nuclear sites in which international inspectors must appeal to Iran, Russia, and China in a bureaucratic process that takes at least 24 days, during which Iran can remove anything covert and in violation of the agreement.

International inspectors have also been denied access to military sites, the most likely places in Iran where illicit nuclear activity is occurring. But even if the JCPOA was delivering on its core promise of a denuclearized Iran, the agreement was sold with specific assurance that the JCPOA would not limit the United States' ability to stop Iran's nonnuclear activities and their support of terror activities.

Then Secretary of State John Kerry, in defense of the agreement, selling the

agreement to Democrats and Republicans in the Congress, testified that: ''If we catch them funding terrorism, they are going to have a problem with the U.S. Congress.''

Mr. Speaker, apparently not, because Members of Congress don't have a problem with this evidence that Iran is funding terrorist proxies and the Assad regime.

For these reasons, it is imperative that Congress pass the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act, which would require the Treasury to provide a report to Congress describing these connections. This is a reporting bill. Even if you support the JCPOA, you should support congressional oversight.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK), a member of the Financial Services Committee, so he can clear up some of the information that we just heard.

Mr. HECK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start with a question.

Why is this bill so long?

Last year, we had a bill, H.R. 5729, to block the sale of Boeing aircraft to Iran. It was short and clear. It was only 2 pages long. I didn't like it and I didn't support it; but the truth is, I always respect people putting forth their honest beliefs.

H.R. 5729, last year, blocked the licenses to sell U.S. planes—straightforward. Torpedoing the plane sales endangered the JCPOA because, as we have indicated, it is an affirmative requirement and an obligation on the U.S. to approve plane sales if a sales agreement is reached. That was part of the deal: You won't build or continue to develop nuclear weapons, we will do certain things, including sell you planes.

Everyone knew what the bill would do and they could decide if they thought that was a good idea or a bad idea. It was very straightforward. It was effectively a proxy on the JCPOA.

This year, we have another bill to block the sale of aircraft to Iran. It is neither short nor clear. In fact, it is six times as long as last year's bill.

□ 1800

It subjects the licenses to an ongoing and complex certification requirement. It literally names and shames U.S. banks providing financing. And, again, it does this purposefully so that it might deter the sale of airplanes so that it might undermine the JCPOA.

Frankly, what I interpret, what I have heard this evening, is tantamount to that. This is, yet again, a proxy on the JCPOA. If you are against the JCPOA, vote ''yes.'' If you are for it, vote ''no.''

This bill, however, obscures its end purpose, that objective of undermining the JCPOA behind process and ambiguity. Why?

If you oppose the sale of aircraft, oppose it. Have the courage of your convictions. Don't just engage in this fearmongering. No matter how many times you say that people in Iran chant ''Death to Israel, Death to America,'' and whatever other form of fearmongering you engage in, at least have the courage of your own convictions. You did last year.

Stand up for what you believe in. If you want Iran to buy Airbus aircraft instead of Boeing aircraft, then say that. Stand up for yourself. Stand up for what you believe.

But let's be clear. That is what this bill will do. Don't dance around.

For my part, I think blocking the sale of American planes is a big mistake on so many levels. Let's be clear. It doesn't deny Iran the use of aircraft; it just will deny them American-made aircraft. It will deny American machinists jobs to work on them.

And need I remind anybody here what it means to be an engineer or a machinist at an aircraft company in this country? It means the kind of jobs that we all aspire to for our constituents. You know the kind; the kind that pay enough that you can buy a home, have decent healthcare, save enough money to send your kid to college if you want to, have regular vacations, and have a secure retirement. Those are the kinds of jobs we are taking away if we pass this bill.

It doesn't just prevent Iran from misusing aircraft, as has been suggested. It just prevents Americans from having maintenance and service agreements that keep eyes on the aircraft because, you see, if Airbus sells them these planes, we have no idea. If they are American-made planes, they come with after-sale maintenance and service agreements. We will have eyes on the planes.

It doesn't force Iran back to the bargaining table. It just jeopardizes and cuts the legs out from under the gains we have made in the JCPOA that I thought my colleague and friend from Connecticut spoke about so eloquently. We don't go to sleep at night worried that Iran is getting closer to a bomb, as we would have, as North Korea has.

So my friends, in summary, passage of this legislation will do three things:

Number one, it will cost America jobs, and good-paying jobs;

Number two, it will make us less safe because it will undermine the JCPOA and, in so doing, not allow us to ensure that these planes are not being used for a nefarious purpose;

And number three, it will actually make us less safe as well, in the sense that if it does, in fact, defeat the purpose of JCPOA— The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALBERG). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. HECK. If it does cut the legs out from JCPOA, as is its purpose, as is clear, then, of course, we are back on the track of Iran developing nuclear weapons as North Korea has. Fewer jobs and less safe; not sure what it is about that proposition that would be appealing to anyone.

So, my friends, I urge you, in the strongest terms possible, be for American jobs. Be for America being safer. Be for us living up to our commitments, and vote ''no'' on this legislation.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN), a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4324, which I cosponsor, the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act, introduced by Congressman ROGER WILLIAMS.

I stand with the courage of my convictions while I listen to others stand with the courage, apparently, of a conviction to coddle the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism.

I have a problem, and I am not going to apologize for it, and my colleagues aren't going to apologize for it; when we have an adversary of our Nation overthrowing foreign governments, financing terror, developing intercontinental ballistic missiles in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, calling Israel the Little Satan and America the Great Satan, pledging to wipe Israel off the map, chanting ''Death to America.''

Just a few weeks ago, the CIA dropped 470,000 documents collected in May of 2011, in the raid of Osama bin Laden's compound. In those documents, it shows a strong relationship between Iran and al-Qaida, and Iran offering finance and arms for carrying out attacks against America.

I signed up to run for the United States Congress and take an oath to protect this country, and, right now, while we are here this holiday season—tonight is the second night of Hanukkah. We are about to have Christmas, New Year's—we have people who are overseas, sometimes on their 8th, 9th, 10th deployment, willing to risk everything in defense of our freedoms and liberties, putting themselves in harm's way.

So when 10 Navy sailors end up getting held hostage and embarrassed with photography and videography, being shamed by the Iranians, and then we say, as a matter of response, thank you? That was our response when they released our 10 detained Navy sailors.

And you want to question the conviction of Congressman WILLIAMS introducing legislation that is incredibly important for protecting the United States and our servicemembers and our allies; and you want to mock us for having a problem with them chanting ''Death to America?'' Whose side are you on?

For anyone who has the courage of conviction to coddle the world's largest state sponsor of terror.

Since the U.S. entered the JCPOA, Iran's state-owned airline, Iran Air,

has used its access to the U.S. aviation industry to purchase planes that aided the Assad regime in carrying out its war crimes in Syria against its own citizens, innocent women and children.

Courage of convictions to stand with the United States, with our allies, and on behalf of the women and children being targeted by the Assad regime in Syria. We have a problem with that, and we want to do something about it.

Don't try to shame us into being apologetic and unwilling and afraid to stand up for all of those right principles. That is the courage and conviction that I stand up with today, with Congressman WILLIAMS, with Chairman HENSARLING, and all the others who are encouraging a strong ''yes'' vote for more accountability, for a stronger national defense, for a better future.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like everybody to know we are not trying to shame anybody. If we were going to shame someone, we would shame them and that party about connection to Russia.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE), an ardent supporter of the Iran nuclear agreement.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I stand in opposition to this bill. The Iran nuclear agreement stands as a major diplomatic achievement that has destroyed Iran's capacity to develop a nuclear weapon.

Detractors point to Iran's bad behavior in other realms—ballistic missiles, support for Hezbollah, violations of human rights. We acknowledge these problems. Nobody is talking about coddling Iran or apologizing for Iran. I resent that implication by the last speaker.

The fact is, we take these problems and these challenges very, very seriously; but we also note that there is not a one of them that wouldn't be much more serious if we were dealing with a nuclear-capable state. So we have got to protect this agreement. We have got to be wary of any proposals that would directly or indirectly threaten it.

And that brings us to the bill before us, H.R. 4324, the so-called Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act, which would make it much more difficult for Iran to purchase commercial aircraft from firms that do business with the United States.

Now, as we all know, Iran's ability to replenish its aging civil aviation fleet, which was depleted by decades of sanctions, was a key incentive for Tehran to sign on to the JCPOA.

Kenneth Katzman of the Congressional Research Service said: ''Iran would view the bill's enactment into law as a breach of the JCPOA. The agreement contains a clear U.S. commitment to undertake such sales to Iran.''

But this bill imposes reporting and certification requirements that could well prompt the Treasury Department to cease issuing licenses allowing for such sales if this certification were to be contingent on non-nuclear factors, factors outside the deal.

Richard Nephew, the lead sanctions expert for the U.S. negotiating team, put it this way. He said: ''My take on this bill is that, if implemented the way I expect, it probably would violate the JCPOA.''

Now, I suppose we have to entertain the possibility that that actually is what the authors of this bill have in mind. Maybe that is the idea, to give the Trump administration and the Iranian hardliners a way of sabotaging the agreement.

Already, President Trump has tried to undermine the JCPOA by refusing to certify Iran's compliance with the deal when, by all accounts, Iran is, in fact, complying.

Now, by directly blocking a specific provision of the agreement, namely, the permissible sale of commercial passenger aircraft, this legislation would send a clear message to Iran that the United States does not negotiate in good faith. It would imply that we expect to have it both ways, with Iran dismantling its nuclear facilities and getting nothing in return.

The bill before us today would also break faith with our P5+1 negotiating partners in a reckless and dangerous way.

Because of this agreement, Mr. Speaker, the breakout time for Iran to develop enough weapons-grade material for a nuclear weapon went from 2 or 3 months to more than a year.

Because of this agreement, the international community has 24/7 access to Iran's nuclear sites, an unprecedented degree of access, intrusive inspections.

And because of this agreement, we possess an enforcement mechanism to ensure Iran's compliance. Why on Earth would we give up these capabilities by failing to uphold our end of the bargain?

That is the way agreements work. We uphold our end of the bargain. We don't sabotage agreement by deceptive legislation like that bill before us.

So, in light of renewed tensions on the Korean Peninsula, now is especially not the time for the United States to go back on its word to our allies and to the international community.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on H.R. 4324.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), an outstanding member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mr. WILLIAMS, for introducing H.R. 4324, the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act. This act is needed.

Tonight, we are not here to rehash the failings of the JCPOA, but we are really here to honor Secretary Kerry's commitment of oversight of Iran outside that agreement. He made it quite clear to Congress in his briefings that we would monitor the world's largest exporter of terror around the world; that we would do everything outside the agreement to enforce sanctions; that we would not stop reviewing their behavior.

This piece of legislation comes at an important time, as the Trump administration is taking significant steps to protect our homeland by reviewing actions around rogue regimes and sponsors of terror around the world, including Iran.

Now, my friend from Washington brought up the subject of the American worker, and, of course, we all are blessed by the brilliance and success of Boeing. We couldn't come to our jobs without them.

But there are 5,000 airlines in the world, Mr. Speaker. There are 10,000 Boeing aircraft in service, and there are 5,700 airplanes on order from the Boeing corporation to help make up that $41 billion of annual revenue.

The question here is not about selling airplanes, the question here is about protecting the homeland and interests of our country around the world.

Unfortunately, civil aviation is commingled with military Quds Force action; not just in what has been said tonight about transporting military action to Syria, supporting a war that has killed some 500,000 people, but what about Boeing transport from Damascus to Caracas?

□ 1815

What about the Boeing aircraft operated by the Iranian regime back and forth between Russia and Iran, back and forth between Tehran and Damascus, between Damascus and Venezuela?

It is not just the civilian aircraft, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we want to be alert, and our American citizens need to know if their bank deposits are being used to extend credit to a regime that seeks pleasure in murdering innocent people, murdering our men and women in uniform and even innocent civilians in their own country.

We may differ on our views on the JCPOA, but we can all agree that nothing in the nuclear deal prevents the sharing of information between an administration and this Congress about financing aircraft for the world's largest state supporter of terrorism. That is what this piece of legislation is trying to achieve. That is what Mr. WILLIAMS' point is in bringing it to the floor, and I appreciate his thoughtful work to implement this much-needed policy and to help keep the citizens in my district safe from Iran's global terror advance.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to read a letter addressed to the Members of Congress from a highly respected organization that is pro-Israel and pro-peace advocacy. I am a member, and I look to the recommendations, the advice, and

the assistance of this organization on all issues related to the Middle East and related to Iran and related to Israel. It is known as J Street, and I am a proud member and a proud participant.

J Street urges Members:

Oppose the so-called Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act, that is H.R. 4324, which is clearly intended to lead to a U.S. violation of the JCPOA.

This bill would impose additional certification requirements on the administration in order to carry out current U.S. obligations related to commercial aircraft sales under the JCPOA.

These new obligations require the administration to certify that Iran is not engaged in certain nonnuclear activity or issue a national security waiver saying they will allow the planes to be sold anyway. In other words, it imposes new unilateral terms for a continuation of the JCPOA that are unrelated to Iran's nuclear conduct.

It has been widely reported in connection with the President's recent refusal to make the necessary certification to Congress under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act that the President resents having to undertake official actions to keep the United States in compliance with the JCPOA.

Proponents of this legislation clearly hope to make use of the President's apparent resistance to taking such steps by adding a new certification requirement that they hope he will also fail to meet, thereby blocking the sale of commercial aircraft and forcing a U.S. violation of the agreement.

Anyone doubting that this is the point of the bill need look no further than the first finding, which makes clear that this bill is a gratuitously anti-Obama, anti-JCPOA vehicle and not a serious attempt to legislate on a bipartisan basis on threats emanating from Iran.

No one who wants to see the JCPOA continue to be implemented should support this bill.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Dylan Williams, the vice president of government affairs who signed this bill, said:

Congress just gave the administration powerful tools to conquer other countries, support of the Assad regime when it passed new sanctions on Iran, Russia, and North Korea a few months ago that the President signed into law. Implementation and assessment of the impact of that law should occur before consideration of any new sanctions legislation.

Again, in addition to the supporters of this body who have worked very hard to try and convince the Members of this body to be on the side of peace, to try and get the Members to understand the seriousness of undermining the JCPOA, the Members of this body who work very hard for peace and who join with groups like J Street and advocate for peace are trying to make sure that the United States stands up to its agreements, understanding how this undermines our leadership in the world.

If we sit down and we negotiate with other countries, as we have done on the JCPOA, and they expect us to live up to the agreements and then they hear that we have various Members of Congress with ideas of their own putting together legislation that is supported by the opposite side of the aisle, coming in not with one piece of legislation, not with two pieces of legislation, but we don't know how many will continue if they are successful in passing the legislation that they are putting before us, if this continues, then I am certain that our allies will not trust us. They will not want to negotiate with us on other deals that are important to peace in this world. I would simply ask the Members on the opposite side of the aisle to pay attention to highly respected, credible organizations like J Street and take their advice about how to give support to the JCPOA.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD), a hard-working member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Mr. WILLIAMS' legislation, H.R. 4324. I want to thank him for his leadership on this front.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that much of the terror funding and the civil unrest that we see in the Middle East can be traced directly back to Iran.

Since we have lifted sanctions on that regime—and, in particular, against state-owned entities like Iran Air—we have opened up ourselves to potentially financing Iran's destabilizing activity in the region.

Congress has a right to know if banks are linked to financing or doing business with Iran, again, the world's largest state sponsor of terror.

This bill is significant, considering what we have recently seen with Iran Air. As recently as 2011, Iran Air was transporting weapons and missiles on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps; and even this year—not 2011, but this year—we have seen Iran Air continue to fly well-known weapons resupply routes to pro-Assad-controlled areas of Syria.

Iran will always continue to find new and creative ways to bypass sanctions and to fund their worldwide terror network. We have to be on constant alert. Mr. WILLIAMS' legislation gives us the tools to do exactly that.

His bill gives the people's House, this House, more oversight on business that the Treasury Department authorizes with Iran. This is important because it conveys the importance of staying alert about our financial institutions when they get involved financially with Iran.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank my colleague and my friend, Mr. WILLIAMS, for his leadership on this issue, and I urge adoption of this bill.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the chairman emeritus of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and chairman of its Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank our esteemed leader for this time, and I rise in strong support of H.R. 4324, the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act, authored by our good friend Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, who is swinging for the fences.

When the Obama administration signed this terrible Iran nuclear deal, in addition to the lifting of sanctions and sending billions of dollars to this hideous regime, it also authorized licenses for the export of commercial passenger planes to Iran.

After selling the world a bill of goods, the administration then turned around and agreed to allow the sale of planes to the world's biggest exporter of terror. Not only that, but U.S. financial institutions would be needed to finalize these sales, meaning American taxpayers' dollars could be used to finance these sales.

The results were predictable, Mr. Speaker. Iran has been using its commercial planes to transport fighters, to transport weapons, to transport material to Hezbollah in Syria, just to mention one. The list could go on and on, many illicit activities.

This is not something that Americans would be supporting, let alone underwriting. That is why Mr. WILLIAMS' bill is so important, and I thank Mr. HENSARLING for bringing it to the floor. It protects the U.S. financial system, and it protects the taxpayers by giving us in Congress greater oversight. That is what this bill is about: oversight over business that the Treasury authorizes with Iran.

As we have heard speaker after speaker, Iran is the number one leading state sponsor of terror. It is responsible for the deaths of countless brave American men and women fighting overseas. It is the destabilizing force in Syria, to name just one of the countries.

The Supreme Leader calls for the destruction of our most trusted ally, the democratic Jewish State of Israel; and the calls for ''death to America,'' Mr. Speaker, they go on and on, and it is written on walls.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, the JCPOA was flawed. We all know that. It was weak and it was dangerous.

Let's ask our constituents, our taxpayers, if they want their dollars to fund the purchase of planes for the number one state sponsor of terror. I think that the answer would be ''no.''

We are actually being asked to supposedly support American jobs by helping Iran, the number one terror state, to buy planes so this horrid human-rights abuser of a country, this killer of Americans can use these very planes to continue exporting its terror activities throughout the world.

This is preposterous. It is a false choice.

Mr. Speaker, this bill protects the American consumer; it protects our constituents; it protects the taxpayer; and it gives us in Congress the proper oversight. Let's pass what this is: a commonsense bill.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 4 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Texas has 5½ minutes remaining.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

On October 13, 2017, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency—that is, the IAEA, the U.N. nuclear watchdog that, since January 2016, has been monitoring and verifying Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments—released a statement noting that, ''At present, Iran is subject to the world's most robust nuclear verification regime,'' confirming that Iran remains in compliance with its JCPOA commitments.

The same day, President Trump announced that he had refused to certify the national security value of the Iran nuclear deal, which gave Congress 60 days to fatally undermine the agreement by re-introducing some or all of the suspended sanctions; although, Congress did not do so.

Despite the fact that the President did not withdraw from the nuclear accord, his disdain for the agreement has always been clear. In a highly confrontational speech, President Trump forcefully denounced the Islamic republic and attacked the deal for failing to curb Iran's destabilizing regional activities, despite the fact the accord was never meant to address every aspect of Iran's maligned activities. It was always intended to focus on Iran's nuclear program.

As an arms control agreement, the deal has, so far, been successful.

□ 1830

Trump has threatened to upend the nuclear deal unless Congress amends it to make its terms more restrictive. The President is looking to find any rationale he can to walk away from the deal without having to take the blame. This legislation is precisely what he has been looking for.

But American unilateralism, at this point, would be a disaster and would make forging a common front against Iran nearly impossible in the future. That is one way of ensuring failure at the outset of a diplomatic effort to pursue a new multilateral agreement, would be to violate an existing one with the same partners.

The President's insistence on renegotiating the JCPOA to extend the duration of several of its constraints make inspections more intrusive and expand its coverage to missiles. It is dangerous and unrealistic, given that every other signatory of the agreement has objected to changing its terms while Iran remains compliant.

If Congress passes this bill, it would give the administration the path it needs to rip up the nuclear card without the constraints placed on Iran by the deal. The administration's hostile attitude towards Iran and stark absence of diplomacy will inevitably put the United States on a path of escalation with Iraq. There is an obvious link with North Korea here as well. Hopefully, at some point, the President may determine that diplomacy has a role in managing the North Korean nuclear missile challenges.

But America's ability to offer a credible, diplomatic path will be seriously undermined if we cannot be trusted to stand by our agreement dealing with Iran to destabilize regional activities. Its ambition to remake large swaths of the Middle East in its image entails a broad range of challenges. Without the JCPOA, however, those challenges become even more daunting.

I urge my colleagues not to give up on our best chance of containing Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons through peaceful means and to join me in rejecting this terrible bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. NORMAN), a member of the Small Business Committee.

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman HENSARLING for yielding. This really isn't that complicated. The JCPOA is a failed policy that was put up by a President who had no interest in protecting this country as it should be. President Trump is finally bringing this back to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4324, the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act. This important legislation is critical to hold Iran accountable and ensure the integrity of U.S. sanctions against Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank ROGER WILLIAMS for his great work on this legislation. The Iran deal allows the United States to license the sale of passenger aircraft to Iran to update their civilian commercial airliner fleet. Despite the deal, Iran's behavior has not changed, and they still remain a principal state sponsor of international terrorism, a direct contributor in propping up the Syrian regime, and a major facilitator of money laundering.

However, enabling commercial aircraft sales could only fortify Iran's rogue behavior. Many, including the Department of Treasury, are concerned that commercial aircraft could be used for noncivilian purposes, considering the state-controlled airline, Iran Air, has facilitated Iran's destabilization of Syria by transporting missile and rocket components to the Syrian regime.

Justice Louis Brandeis once stated that, ''Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants,'' and that is what this legislation seeks to do. It simply adds a crucial layer of reporting requirements, certifying that the sale of passenger aircraft does not pose a money laundering risk or violate U.S. sanctions.

Iranian continues to threaten the stability of the Middle East, and it poses a threat to U.S. national interests. Holding Iran accountable and preventing them from continuing to destabilize Syria should not be controversial at all.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully urge all of my colleagues to strongly support this legislation.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman has 4 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, from time to time in my Congressional career I come to the House floor, and I have a surreal moment. Iran is the world's foremost state sponsor of terror, and we have Members on the other side of the aisle saying: Well, we shouldn't learn anything about them. We shouldn't learn about who is financing their aircraft. We shouldn't learn whether or not aircraft will be converted for military purposes.

Iran is a regime where every day the leadership wakes up shouting: ''Death to Israel, Death to America.'' Yet I have friends on the other side of the aisle who say: Well, we shouldn't have any reporting on Iran because it might hurt their feelings.

This is a surreal moment, Mr. Speaker, an absolute surreal moment. We have been told over and over that somehow this stops the JCPOA, the nuclear deal with Iran. I wish it did, but it doesn't. I would suggest to my friends on the other side of the aisle, if they actually read the bill, it is 10 pages long, 6 pages of findings. You can put the findings aside and read the 4 pages. It is a reporting bill.

It has certifications. And guess what the implications are if the administration can't give the proper certifications? Nothing. The deal continues to go on. It is perhaps the single worst foreign policy agreement in the history of America that legitimizes Iran's nuclear program and, on its best day, slows up their nuclear weapons by maybe a few years, at best, on its best day.

When the JCPOA was sold to us by the previous administration, we were told: This would be for civilian aircraft use only. Don't worry about it. This is not going to exacerbate terrorism in any way. But we know Boeing itself says their aircraft, which are being sold to Iran, can be used for combat purposes, and, in fact, have been. Iran Air was cited in 2011. It was sanctioned for supporting the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which has been designated as a terrorist organization.

This isn't just theory, Mr. Speaker. It is a fact. Then we had my colleague, the gentleman from Washington, say: Well, it is important that we sell aircraft to Iran so companies can make profits. Well, using his logic, maybe we ought to sell weapons to North Korea if some company can make a profit. I think not, Mr. Speaker.

There are some things that are more important. Our security is even more important than the profit of any one particular company. So, again, this is a simple reporting requirement.

I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) for his leadership here. It is incredibly important that we understand from those who sold us this terrible Iranian deal, they need to make good on their promises.

We need to make sure that civilian aircraft are being used for civilian purposes. We need to make sure that the banks who are financing these deals are not financing terrorism. Yet those on the other side of the aisle say: No, let's put our heads in the sand. Let's just trust—let's trust the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism. They will do the right thing. Let's just ignore this terrorism thing.

No. No, Mr. Speaker. That is why it is so important that we enact H.R. 4324, and I urge all my colleagues to vote for it. It is important to America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4324, the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act, introduced by my friend ROGER WILLIAMS. This bill is critical to Congress' sustained effort to roll back the most egregious concessions from the Obama Administration's disastrous nuclear deal with Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken many times about how the Iran deal endangers our national security, namely by acquiescing to Iran's ambition to become a nuclear threshold in less than a decade. As if this concession—and the woefully inadequate inspections regime President Obama agreed to—were not troubling enough, the deal came with dozens of additional sweeteners for Iran that were folded into the main text of the agreement and an unknown number of side-deals.

These inducements were wrong on principle and they are downright dangerous in practice. On principle, Iran should not be gently incentivized to come clean about its nuclear program—it should be strictly compelled to comply with international norms. In practice, these numerous U.S. concessions to Iran effectively handed the world's largest sponsor of terrorism more resources to advance its campaign for regional hegemony. By providing $115 billion in sanctions relief, a $1.7 billion ransom payment, and an $8.6 million payment for excess heavy water that violated the terms of the deal, the Obama Administration's calamitous deal generated a windfall for the Iranian regime.

Mr. Speaker, one especially troubling concession was the Obama Administration's agreement in the text of the deal to sell commercial passenger aircraft to Iran while at the same time lifting sanctions on Iran Air, a national carrier notorious for ferrying Iran's military manpower and materiel around the region. Iran Air was sanctioned by the United States in July 2011 under Executive Order 13382 for "for providing material support and services to the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and Iran's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics." Lest we believe Iran Air has straightened up its act since 2011, the Washington Free Beacon reported in August on images from this summer showing Iranian militiamen flying Iran Air to join the civil war in Syria.

Mr. Speaker, it's also clear that Iran has never had a greater incentive than it does today to double down on its hegemonic schemes as it expands its footholds in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and elsewhere in the region. We have long known of Iran's genocidal intentions toward our critical and democratic ally, Israel. For years Iran has poured money and resources into Hizballah and Hamas to develop proxies that can threaten Israel on its borders. Today, however, Iran is closer than ever to achieving its own toehold near the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights from which to menace Israel and terrorize its people.

Why, in this context, would the United States knowingly furnish Iran with aircraft it needs to move its military assets around the region? Yet, as we speak, a sale of 80 Boeing aircraft to Iran Air, worth as much as $16.6 billion, is on track to proceed unless the Administration wisely intervenes or Congress hits the brakes.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4324 is crucial to applying necessary and thorough scrutiny to this deal or others like it. This bill will require the Department of the Treasury to certify that the beneficiaries of any such deal do not include Iranians known to be involved in transporting materiel or other resources for designated individuals or groups. Given Iran Air's sinister past, it is only logical to demand this sort of certification.

Furthermore, the bill would require the Treasury to certify that any such transaction does not pose a "significant money laundering or terrorism financing risk to the U.S. financial system." Again, considering that Iran remains the world's largest financier of terrorism and on the Financial Action Task Force's blacklist of countries that pose a high risk of money laundering, it is only responsible to establish this sort of standard for major U.S. transactions with Iranian companies.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to support H.R. 1638, the Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act, introduced by my friend BRUCE POLIQUIN. This bill requires common sense reporting to Congress on the terrorism financing and money laundering threat posed by Iran to help us address it more effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support these timely and critical measures.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. GAETZ

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BANKS of Indiana). The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 6, line 18, strike "or".

Page 6, after line 18 insert the following (and redesignate the subsequent subclause accordingly):

(II) has knowingly transported items used to establish in Syria a permanent military presence of either Iranian military forces or Iranian backed militia; or

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 658, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas, Chairman HENSARLING, for his guidance and leadership in assisting me with this amendment. I would also like to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS) for ensuring this Congress takes the strongest possible position as it relates to Iran and ensuring that we use every arrow in the proverbial quiver, financially speaking, so that U.S. assets and U.S. resources are not used to proliferate terror in a way that is consistent with Iran's paradigm and their budding hegemony.

Across the Middle East, we see Iran funding terrorist proxies, destabilizing the region, threatening their neighbors, and functioning as an eyesore for the world. So I am glad to be here offering an amendment to ensure that, as we use the tools at our disposal to limit Iran's power to be a destabilizing sponsor of terror, we pay particular focus to the activities going on currently in Syria.

In Syria now, a ceasefire has had an unintended consequence of giving Iran space to be able to move in and make attempts to harden long-term military assets, installations, so that troops could be housed and potentially launch other attacks and fund and equip Iran's terrorist proxies throughout the area.

It is no surprise that the facility that Iran most recently worked on would have housed upwards of 5,000 soldiers. It is believed that, potentially, Israel took action to ensure that the construction did not continue on that particular facility.

My amendment, Mr. Speaker, conditions the provisions of this bill on an attestation that Iran has not set up permanent, present military in southern Syria. I think that is critically important.

In the last conversation I had with Prime Minister Netanyahu, he indicated that Israel was most concerned, in all of the world, about the risks posed by Iran setting up a permanent military presence in southern Syria, and that that would cause potentially kinetic conflict, war, and even more dramatic, catastrophic outcomes.

Again, I thank Chairman HENSARLING and Mr. WILLIAMS for their strong leadership. I offer this amendment to back our ally, Israel, and to ensure that Iran does not have the capability to establish a permanent military presence in southern Syria.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the previous question

is ordered on the bill, as amended, and on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ).

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Swalwell of California moves to recommit the bill H.R. 4324 to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Page 6, line 23, strike ''and''.

Page 7, line 7, add ''and'' at the end

Page 7, after line 7, insert the following:

(iv) no financial institution participating in such transaction is engaged in business with a foreign entity that has been found by the Secretary, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, to have engaged in or authorized cyber-attacks targeting any election held in the United States;

□ 1845

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill. It will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to a final passage vote, as amended.

My amendment would add an additional certification requirement from the Treasury Secretary for financial institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleagues across the aisle. Iran is a threat to our national security, and we should seek to hold them accountable, protect Americans, and defend our allies. The first major step in the last decade to do so was with the Iran nuclear agreement taking a nuclear power off the table. But we should also seek to hold accountable Iran's chief enabler and best friend in the world, Russia, which my amendment will seek to do.

My amendment would add a requirement that the Treasury Secretary certify that an institution financing the export of commercial aircraft to Iran did not engage in business with any foreign entity which engaged in or authorized cyber attacks targeting American elections. This is a commonsense provision to ensure that companies are aware of the effects their financial dealings have on supporting those who engage in election interference.

We should think carefully about letting financial institutions do business with countries that choose to conduct this new cyber warfare. While it may have been unthinkable before 2016 that a foreign adversary would interfere in one of our elections, we know now that the threat is all too real.

Our intelligence community concluded that Russia interfered in our 2016 elections; and it also concluded that this was ordered by President Vladimir Putin, with the goal of helping its preferred candidate, Donald Trump. Why this is something that the President and some of my colleagues across the aisle still question is beyond shocking. It is also a slap in the face of the dedicated men and women who serve and toil for our intelligence communities.

The 2016 election, Mr. Speaker, is behind us. We shouldn't relitigate it. We should learn, though, from how a foreign adversary, a friend of Iran, sought to influence the American voter. This is not a Democratic Party or Republican Party issue. It is about our freedom of choice: who gets to choose when we go to the ballot box.

Iran is not our friend. Guess who else is not our friend? Iran's friend Russia. But if you don't believe me, if you are cynical enough, as the President is, to dismiss the findings of our intelligence community, then believe the Russians. Believe their own declarations.

In September, a Duma parliament member, Nikonov Vyacheslav, stated that the United States intelligence community slept while Russia elected a new United States President of the United States.

Does anyone in this House want to do something about that?

In this attack, did Russia work with the Trump campaign?

That is a serious question that remains outstanding. Every day seems to bring new revelations about the connections between the Trump campaign and Russia. We must do all we can to allow Bob Mueller and his team to pursue that evidence unimpeded by Presidential obstruction.

We also must be able to conduct our investigations on the House Intelligence Committee to do all we can to get to the bottom, to tell the American people how we were so vulnerable, who in the United States was responsible, whether the U.S. Government response was adequate, and what we can do to make sure it never happens again.

I fear, Mr. Speaker, that the President and many of his own enablers in Congress are seeking to fire Bob Mueller, which would set us back and greatly affect our ability to prevent another attack by Russia. But what we can do with this amendment today is not only stand up to Iran, but also stand up to their chief enabler, someone who finances them and assists the terror that they enact across the globe.

Vote for this motion to recommit, and, by doing so, Members will show their concern not only about Iran, but also about their chief enabler. Members will show their concern for our democracy and the interference that Iran's best friend, Russia, carried out in our last election.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, my friends on the other side of the aisle seem to be schizophrenic. They can't seem to figure out whether they want to coddle Iran or to ''stand up to'' Iran. We were also told that H.R. 4324 was designed to ''blame and shame'' financial institutions, and now they offer a motion to recommit to blame and shame financial institutions.

So here is what is going on, Mr. Speaker: What we have is a regime that wakes up every morning shouting ''Death to America; death to Israel,'' and yet we have a motion to recommit trying to relitigate the 2016 Presidential election.

We have a regime which has been certified as the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism whom we are trying to hold accountable and from whom we are trying to get information, and our friends on the other side of the aisle are trying to relitigate the 2016 Presidential election.

We know that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps supports the Assad regime in Syria. According to the U.N., the Assad government, with the help of Iran, has now carried out 27 chemical weapon attacks since the start of the Syrian conflict, including an April 2017 sarin gas attack that killed more than 80 people, including scores of women and children, and my friends on the other side of the aisle want to relitigate the 2016 Presidential election.

Mr. Speaker, Iran continues to imprison foreign nationals, including Americans—including Americans—including 81-year-old Baquer Namazi, who has lost his teeth in prison due to malnutrition. We have had another American prisoner, a student at Princeton, who has suffered health problems, and yet my friends on the other side of the aisle, with their motion to recommit, want to relitigate the 2016 Presidential election.

This is a serious moment, Mr. Speaker. H.R. 4324 by the gentleman from Texas is an important piece of legislation to ensure that civilian aircraft sales to Iran remain civilian aircraft and that our financial institutions are not unwittingly helping to finance this rogue terrorist regime, and it is no time to relitigate an election that my friends on the other side of the aisle lost.

We need to reject the motion to recommit, and we need to enact H.R. 4324.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

## HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

## PAYING TRIBUTE TO SURF LEGEND BRUCE BROWN

(Mr. ROHRABACHER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to surf legend and filmmaker Bruce Brown, who, at 80 years of age, died this week.

Bruce Brown challenged a generation of Americans to follow our dream and to find our perfect wave. He reached out to introduce us to the magic experience of being propelled by the power of nature on an ocean wave. Adventure and a rush of excitement was only as far away as a local beach.

Bruce Brown made movies about surfing. ''Endless Summer'' was his best known. But his films were more than entertainment. He spoke to our soul and our spirit of adventure. He inspired us to go for it, to take on towering waves, just as other Americans scaled the tallest mountain peaks and even journeyed to the Moon.

Isn't that what America was all about? Isn't that what America is all about?

My first surfboard was a large, single-fin Velzy. Dale Velzy owned a surf shop in San Clemente and financed Bruce Brown's first film, ''Slippery When Wet.''

The surf culture Bruce Brown helped get born is still here. Outsiders are intrigued by it. You know when you are part of it.

Bruce Brown showed us the way. A few days ago, he passed on and is paddling into the distant sunset. He followed his dream, he found his perfect wave, and he rode it as far as it would take him.

## TAX REFORM ON STUDENTS

(Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, education is supposed to be the great equalizer, but instead of investing in our students, Republicans, through their tax scam, are attempting to widen that equality gap.

Young people want to pursue higher education, and Republicans want to punish them with higher taxes so we can give away benefits to millionaires and billionaires.

Students are gaining knowledge that can actually make a difference in this world, but the Republicans' tax plan will only serve to deter them from that goal.

It is right here in black and white. Republicans are trying to eliminate student loan interest deductions. They want to tax college endowments that provide scholarships and student aid. They are taxing graduate tuition benefits that would make graduate school unattainable for low- and middle-income students.

So this Republican attack on college and graduate students says loud and clear: Low income? No rich parents? Good luck. Pay up.

It is an absolute disgrace.

## RECOGNIZING WOODWARD TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR CLYDE GLOSSNER FOR 47 YEARS OF SERVICE

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Clyde Glossner, who has served the Woodward Township in Clinton County as supervisor for nearly 50 years.

Supervisor Glossner, who is 84, will retire this year after 47 years of service. Next Tuesday, he will oversee his last board of supervisors meeting.

Supervisor Glossner has been a resident of the township his entire life. He is a member of the Forty and Eight organization and the Masons in Lock Haven.

He and his wife of 60 years, Wilma, were married in 1955 in First Evangelical United Brethren Church in Lock Haven. In September 1955, Clyde and Wilma purchased their home in Woodward Township. They still live there today, and they have three grown sons.

In his earlier years, Supervisor Glossner worked as a food inspector for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. He has shown his dedication to his neighbors through his years of public service, and the community will gather next Tuesday, December 19, at the Dunnstown Fire Hall to honor him.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Supervisor Glossner for a life of service, and I wish him well in his retirement.

## TAX REFORM

(Mrs. BEATTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, what is happening in Washington? With the holidays coming up, I would like to know why the Republican majority seems so intent on putting coal in the stockings of everyday Americans.

Last week, the House passed a continuing resolution that did little but move the threat of a government shutdown to just a few days before Christmas.

The Republican tax bill is a brazen attempt to put money in the pockets of the superwealthy and well-connected at the expense of seniors, our students, middle class families, and hardworking Americans.

The American people don't deserve this tax hike. It is a billionaires-first Republican tax scam, and they don't deserve a government that reels from shutdown crisis to crisis doing nothing but creating uncertainty in our country.

What we should be doing is fixing CHIP. The Children's Health Insurance Program provides real, permanent tax relief to those who need it most: our 9 million children, 250,000 in my district.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve better. They deserve better jobs, better wages, and a better future.

□ 1900

## FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SANDY HOOK SHOOTING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of tonight's Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, December 14, marks the 5-year anniversary of the horrific school shooting in the home community of Sandy Hook Elementary School.

That day shocked the Nation. Twenty schoolchildren and six educators—20 6-year-olds and 7-year-olds—were ripped from the community of Newtown and from the United States.

I remember that day. I was a newly elected Member of Congress learning about what it means to serve in this

august body. I was with about 40 or 50 of my colleagues learning about our duties when I started to get emails and text messages that something terrible had happened at home. By noon, I learned the worst. Dozens of children had been gunned down, in cold blood, along with their teachers.

I threw my things in the back of the car and I drove from Boston. I called my mother, I called my minister, and I prayed for wisdom and I prayed for guidance and the courage to face those families.

I arrived in Newtown while families were being notified that their children who they had put on the bus that morning, thinking about Hanukkah or Christmas or thinking about the snow that was already on the ground, would never come home.

It is sad. It is sad and it is inexcusable that I stand here 5 years later. In that time, this Chamber, the people's House, has not taken up the people's business.

As of this fall, in fact, over 90 percent of Americans still support having universal background checks on all gun sales to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. Over 90 percent of American households that have guns also support that commonsense legislation. Yet, in this House, we have not been given the opportunity to vote on that legislation. In those 5 years, 170,000 Americans have lost their lives to gun violence. Think about that: 170,000.

Newtown, like my hometown of Cheshire, is about 30,000 people. That is multiple Newtowns all day, every single one. Every single one of those Americans was a son or a daughter of someone and had friends and neighbors and loved ones. Again, in that time, this body has not acted.

Two weeks ago, I was in church in Danbury, Connecticut. I was at services with a congregation I try to get to every 6 months or so. I saw a couple of people I didn't expect to see. I saw the mother of one of the little girls who was killed 5 years ago. I saw the daughter of the principal. They were there for guidance, for wisdom, for courage to fight the battle that the American people are waging for this House to take action on.

The American people know the right thing to do. Our law enforcement know the right thing to do. The vast majority of responsible gun owners know the right thing to do. Yet, somehow, this body has failed to act.

But it is never too late. Now is the time for us to step up. Now is the time for us to shoulder our responsibilities so that no other community has to go through what Newtown has gone through. Although, in that time, we have now seen Las Vegas, we have seen Charleston, we have seen Orlando. There are killing fields now in America. That is not right. It doesn't need to be.

I am joined tonight by several of my colleagues who are passionate advocates for gun sense and gun safety in America.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. BEATTY).

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, Congresswoman ESTY, for leading this Special Order hour and for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I will never forget the Sandy Hook tragedy that happened 5 years ago tomorrow. It was like yesterday.

I was at Harvard University. I was seated next to Congresswoman ESTY when the news broke about the shooting in the district she had just been elected to serve.

The more we learned that day, the more devastating and heartbreaking the news became. Innocent children were taken away from their parents, from their brothers and sisters, and from their community.

I hoped and prayed that day that we would never see a tragedy like Sandy Hook. But, of course, our country continues to be unique in the number of people we have lost to mass shootings and gun violence.

As a Member of Congress, I cannot stand by and allow our communities to continue to be upturned by the loss of innocent lives. There are too many things we can do to address this epidemic.

We should allow Federal agencies to study gun violence as a public health crisis, because it is. We should keep guns out of the hands of individuals on the terrorist watch list and those convicted of hate crimes. We should close the gun show loopholes, Mr. Speaker, and reinstate the assault weapons ban.

You will note that none of the proposals I just mentioned would in any way infringe on the Second Amendment or limit the ability of Americans to protect themselves or their families. So there should be no reason why our Republican colleagues can't join us and pass sensible reforms that will save lives, like the lives we could have saved at Sandy Hook.

I hope and pray that this Congress has the courage to curb this epidemic of gun violence, because I don't want to continue to see the Sandy Hooks, the Charleston Nines, the Orlandos, or what we saw this year in cities like Las Vegas or small towns like Sutherland Springs.

One of the things we can do to honor the memory of the victims of those tragedies and all victims of gun violence is to make sure that no more families have to experience the same senseless loss.

Again, I thank my colleague and friend for being courageous and for standing up and fighting for better gun laws so that we can save lives. I thank her for being a champion and leading tonight's effort.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON), my friend and the leader in our effort, who is an expert in guns. He has experienced more than his share of gun violence as a decorated servicemember fighting our Nation's battles, and he has now led us for the last 5 years in our efforts for a safer, better society and a better world as the head of our Gun Violence Prevention Task Force.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and also for her leadership in regard to gun violence prevention and all the work that she has done and all of the effort she has put forward to try and bring some common sense to this issue.

The speaker before me said that she will never forget what happened at Sandy Hook and where she was when that tragedy took place. I don't think there are any of us who know what Sandy Hook was or were in Congress when Sandy Hook happened or care about this issue who will ever forget where we were.

For me, I was in my home State of California, in the Sacramento Valley, in a duck blind. I was duck hunting. Yes, I am a hunter. I am a gun owner. I carried a weapon in Vietnam during the Vietnam war. I strongly support the Second Amendment.

But I truly and passionately believe that, as a responsible gun owner, I have a responsibility, as does every responsible gun owner in the United States of America, to speak out to make sure that everyone who handles and owns a firearm does it safely and responsibly and that we do everything we can to make sure that people who shouldn't get their hands on firearms don't.

I know you can't stop everybody, but we should be doing everything we can to minimize the likelihood that someone who shouldn't have a firearm—a criminal, a domestic abuser, someone who is dangerously mentally ill—doesn't get their hands on firearms.

Last week, families who lost loved ones in the Sandy Hook massacre came here to Capitol Hill to share their grief and to call for action to deal with this terrible, terrible thing we call gun violence. This was a day after the House passed the dangerous Concealed Carry Reciprocity bill that would let criminals convicted of violent crimes carry loaded concealed guns in virtually every State in the country.

Instead of honoring the 20 precious little children and the 6 brave and dedicated educators who were slaughtered at Sandy Hook, the Republican leadership put the gun lobby ahead of State laws and ahead of gun violence prevention.

We have had 40 moments of silence since Sandy Hook. Forty moments of silence. Meanwhile, there have been 1,500 mass shootings since that awful day in December, 5 years ago.

64,000 people in the United States of America have been killed by someone using a gun. Last week, the families of those victims asked us one thing. They asked us to honor their loved ones with action, stop the gun lobby's reckless and profit-driven agenda, and stand up

for communities all across this country.

As I have said before, I am a gun owner. I have owned and used guns all of my life. I support the Second Amendment.

I am here tonight to call on the Republican leadership to come to the table. Let's move commonsense, bipartisan legislation that will keep us safe, keep our communities safe, and still honor the Second Amendment.

I care about the people in my district, as I know all of you care about the people in your districts. I have a son who is a deputy sheriff. I certainly don't want him to go out on a call and meet up with somebody who shouldn't have a gun. I have got grandchildren in my community. I certainly don't want them exposed to people who shouldn't have guns.

I am here tonight to call on the Republican leadership to do something about this. Let's move this commonsense, bipartisan legislation. We can start by expanding background checks to make it harder for criminals and the dangerously mentally ill to get their hands on guns. This should be the first line of defense. Congress should make that happen.

Ninety-two percent of the American people believe we should expand background checks. What is the harm in checking to ensure that someone is not a criminal or to ensure that someone is not dangerously mentally ill before we allow them to buy a gun and take it off into the community where they can possibly do some harm?

We put these ideas up before this leadership and there has been silence. No hearings on the bill, no votes on the bill.

Well, if the Republican leadership doesn't like our ideas about how to curb gun violence, then how about putting together a select committee of both Democrats and Republicans? Charge that select committee with working on the issue of gun violence prevention and to come up with some ideas that will keep our communities safe.

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We owe it to the families of Sandy Hook and to all those who have lost someone to gun violence. We dishonor their memory when we do nothing, and that is what is happening under this leadership: we are doing nothing. That is shameful. We need to make sure that we do everything we can to help prevent gun violence.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), ranking member of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations of the House Judiciary Committee and vice chair of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I thank her for her leadership. I am sure she is leading on this devastating day and devastating loss in her district that she would much prefer not to do.

As I listened to my colleagues, each of us giving our own separate story of where we were the day of Sandy Hook, all I can say, and what I remember, is that I became breathless; I became unbelieving. It was a very painful day. It was a sickening day, horrifying, and I was questioning: Is this really happening, or did this really happen?

As a member of the Judiciary Committee, and as I have listened over the years of some of the more descriptive accounts of Sandy Hook, some of the stories of such bravery of the principal and teachers who lost their lives, or those who tried to intervene on this deranged gunman—who, by the way, killed his mother before he came to that school—there is nothing more that you can say. Breathless. Similar to the actions of former President Barack Obama.

I can distinctly remember him being before the national audience, the people of the United States, as I recall, in the White House, and wiping a tear, or tears, away from his eyes. I think the whole Nation, at that time, crumbled. A Commander in Chief, known for his strong, stoic leadership, could not comprehend what had happened to these children at Sandy Hook.

I think all of us believe this would be a galvanizing call to action. All of us took notice. We never expected Las Vegas with 50-plus killed in 2017, never expected Orlando in 2016 with 50 killed, or Virginia Tech that happened a few years before.

It amazes me that we are here in commemoration and not here in celebration of what we accomplished for those who yet live: the little ones who go every day to school, the college students, the people who go to clubs, the church-going people. What did we accomplish? Why are we being rebuffed?

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Sandy Hook families, of whom I met as well, what brave men and women. Here they are spending their time trying to be the soldiers of reason around gun safety. It is horrifying to admit that gun violence now seems to be a staple of American life.

The United States ranks number one in the world in terms of firearms per capita, with 88.8 guns per 100, and has the highest homicide by firearm rate in the developed world. The problem is so endemic that gun violence is now the third leading cause of death for children in the United States.

How many parents crumble themselves or fall over a casket of a dead child? We know in Chicago that children die by drive-by shootings through no fault of their own. Chicago has tough gun laws, and there is a mockery being made by those who oppose gun safety laws, but you recognize that the surrounding areas that Chicago is in the midst of—the States—they have no constraints of much, so the guns are transported into States like Illinois and cities like Chicago.

An average of 1,297 children die annually from gun-related injuries. And our colleague and friend, ROBIN KELLY, reminds us all the time of the gun violence that continues in cities like Chicago.

Guns are linked to roughly 33,000 deaths in the United States per year. About two-thirds of them are suicides.

According to the Pew Research Center, a majority of Americans across partisan lines support gun policy proposals, such as barring people with mental illness from buying guns, prohibiting gun purchases by people on Federal no-fly or watch lists, something we have been trying to pass forever—a reasonable response to the safety of Americans.

As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, I cannot imagine why that would not be a unifying legislative initiative—and background checks for private gun sales and sales at gun shows and universal background checks.

There is always the rebuttal: ''Guns don't kill, people do.'' But people with varying conditions take up guns because they are allowed to do so with unfettered gun purchases. It is well known—the percentage of membership of the NRA. That is why I was glad to listen to Chairman THOMPSON, who is a gun owner, a gun user, but how fortunate we are to have him lead the committee, because he can unabashedly, as a war veteran, combat war veteran, say that it doesn't make sense in America to be able to have unfettered gun use.

The majority must cut its close ties to the powerful gun lobby to facilitate useful gun control legislation necessary immediately. America has six times as many firearm homicides as Canada and nearly 16 times as many as Germany.

The United Nations data shows that America far and away leads other developed countries when it comes to gun-related homicides. America has 4.4 percent of the world's population, but almost half of the civilian-owned guns around the world.

In December 2012, a gunman walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, and killed 20 children, 6 adults, and himself—someone who had killed his mother before he came. Since then, there have been at least 1,518 mass shootings, with at least 1,715 people killed, and 6,000 wounded.

Who would have ever imagined that a man would be at the top of a hotel and massively kill so many. Who would ever imagine that there is a law on the books that prevent the Centers for Disease Control and the NIH to study the impact of gun violence as a health crisis. This Congress has. Republicans have.

So, in spite of mass shootings, we have unfortunate opposition and downright obstructionism on getting good gun safety legislation on the floor of the House.

I am not a stranger to this. I come from Texas. There are a lot of guns in

Texas. And I would like to think that a majority of my fellow Texans handle their guns safely and understand the value of gun safety legislation.

But when I introduced the first city ordinance to hold parents responsible for children that got guns and shot each other, it was an uprising, a revolution. It was a packed chamber. People were wearing their colonial clothing, playing flutes, singing patriotic songs, and saying that we were stepping on the Second Amendment.

But medical doctors and parents who had lost children because those children had gotten guns and shot their sibling, they understood that it was a small measure to stop children from getting their parents' guns on a summer day, or after school, and injuring or killing their little brother or sister.

Is there any common sense?

So today, I join in honoring the Sandy Hook families, an honor that I know they did not wish to have. They would rather have their precious little ones.

As I close, I want to make two points:

There is no doubt that people are dying because of gun violence, that we exceed the rational civilized perspective of how many guns are in this country, and that our children are dying. Seven children and adolescents lose their lives to gun violence each day, 75 percent of which are under the age of 12 years old. A lot of these are through accidental shootings where children get guns.

I leave you with this perspective: a great nation. Yes, we send young people into war. That is one of the arguments: 18-year-olds have guns, yes, as they stand up for their country, in an organized, regularized manner to defend this Nation, and we thank them for their young patriotism.

But I venture to say, as I visit faraway places—war zones—young soldiers understand the difference of an AR–15 or an AK rifle in war, as opposed to being on the streets. And our officers, who are doing their duty, good officers, who are in the course of good police work, who have to do a stop, and they run into someone who now has been given latitude to the concealed carry reciprocity bill, to just carry a gun any way you want, and if you come to a State that has strict and positive gun safety laws, that officer has to be able to be judge and jury to determine whether your random license from somewhere else is credible.

As my colleague said: That is the Christmas gift that they are giving to the children of America, rather than the universal background check or the forbidding of individuals on a terrorist list carrying guns. That is not the gift that they are willing to give.

They are giving our children, under the twinkling of the lights, rather than the loving arms of safety and security—they are giving them bullets and automatic weapons and the right for people to go on the streets and kill in churches, like that in Texas and that in South Carolina.

Mr. Speaker, I finish by saying that even the smallest of amendments, when we did the concealed weapons carry, the one that would disallow those with convictions of domestic violence and stalking, my Republican friends voted it down. Or an amendment that said that if you committed a hate crime, and convicted of such, my Republican friends voted it down.

So I am not giving up, and I thank the gentlewoman for having us come today. My celebration tonight is of the courage of families who suffered so much to continue their journey to stand up and be counted for what is right in America, and that is real gun safety legislation.

Mr. Speaker, on October 1, 2017 the deadliest mass shooting in the history of the United States occurred in Las Vegas, Nevada when, in a heinous act of terror and hatred, 58 persons were killed and 515 others were injured in a shooting at an outdoor concert near the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas.

Until then, June 13, 2016 marked the deadliest mass shooting in the history of the United States in Orlando, Florida, when, in another heinous act of terror and hatred, 49 persons were killed at Pulse, a popular nightclub, meeting place, and sanctuary for Central Florida's vibrant and dynamic LGBTQ community; sadly, the Las Vegas mass shooting surpassed that dreadful shooting in numbers of dead and injured.

The horrifying events in Las Vegas mark the 273rd mass shooting in the U.S. in the 275 days that have passed so far in 2017, according to Gun Violence Archive.

Mass shootings are a near daily occurrence in America, but what happened in Las Vegas stands out: It was the deadliest such incident in U.S. history, with more than 58 killed and 515 injured.

Including that massacre, the four deadliest U.S. mass shootings have occurred over the past 10 years.

A mass shooting is defined by Gun Violence Archive as any incident in which four or more are shot and/or killed in a single event, at the same general time and location not including the shooter.

Recent U.S. mass shootings include:

1. Las Vegas, 2017: 50+ killed
2. Orlando, 2016: 50 killed
3. Virginia Tech, 2007: 32 killed
4. Sandy Hook, 2012: 27 killed
5. San Ysirdo, 1984: 21 killed
6. San Bernadino, 2015: 14 killed
7. Edmond, 1986: 14 killed
8. Fort Hood, 2009: 13 killed
9. Columbine, 1999: 13 killed

There have been more than 11,600 deaths linked to gun violence so far in 2017, which is roughly equivalent to nearly four 9/11 attacks in terms of the total number killed on September 11, 2001.

Comparatively, more than 15 thousand were killed by gun violence in 2016, and there were 383 mass shootings.

It is horrifying to admit that gun violence now seems to be a staple of American life.

The United States ranks No. 1 in the world in terms of firearms per capita—with 88.8 guns per 100 people—and it has the highest homicide-by-firearm rate in the developed world.

The problem is so endemic that gun violence is now the third leading cause of death for children in the U.S.

An average of 1,297 children die annually from gun-related injuries.

Guns are linked to roughly 33 thousand deaths in the U.S. per year; about two-thirds of them are suicides.

According to Pew Research Center, a majority of Americans (across partisan lines) support gun policy proposals such as barring people with mental illnesses from buying guns; prohibiting gun purchases by people on federal no-fly or watch lists; and background checks for private gun sales and sales at gun shows.

The majority must cut its close ties to the powerful gun lobby to facilitate useful gun control legislation necessary immediately.

America has six times as many firearm homicides as Canada, and nearly 16 times as many as Germany.

United Nations data shows that America far and away leads other developed countries when it comes to gun-related homicides.

America has 4.4 percent of the world's population, but almost half of the civilian-owned guns around the world.

In December 2012, a gunman walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, and killed 20 children, six adults, and himself.

Since then, there have been at least 1,518 mass shootings, with at least 1,715 people killed and 6,089 wounded.

The fairly broad definition of ''mass shooting'' includes not only shootings in which four or more people were murdered, but shootings in which four or more people were shot at all (excluding the shooter).

Even under this broad definition, mass shootings make up a tiny portion of America's firearm deaths, which totaled more than 33,000 in 2014.

On average, there is more than one mass shooting for each day in America.

Whenever a mass shooting occurs, supporters of gun rights often argue that it is inappropriate to bring up political debates about gun control in the aftermath of a tragedy.

For example, former Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, a strong supporter of gun rights, criticized former President Barack Obama for ''trying to score cheap political points'' when Obama mentioned gun control after a mass shooting in Charleston, South Carolina.

But if this argument is followed to its logical end, then it will never be the right time to discuss mass shootings.

Under the broader definition of mass shootings, America has nearly one mass shooting a day.

So if Congress is forced to wait for a time when there is not a mass shooting to talk gun control, Congress could find itself waiting for a very long time.

States with more guns have more gun deaths.

Within the United States, a wide array of empirical evidence indicates that more guns in a community leads to more homicide.

Higher populations, more stress, more immigrants, and more mental illness does not correlate with more gun deaths.

States with tighter gun control laws have fewer gun-related deaths.

A 2016 review of 130 studies in 10 countries, published in Epidemiologic Reviews, found that new legal restrictions on owning and purchasing guns tended to be followed by a drop in gun violence—a strong indicator that restricting access to guns can save lives.

The good news is that all firearm homicides, like all homicides and crime, have declined over the past two decades—although that may have changed in 2015 and 2016, with a recent rise in murders nationwide.

There is still active debate among criminal justice experts about why this crime drop is occurring—but one theory that researchers have widely debunked is the idea that more guns have deterred crime—in fact, the opposite may be true, based on research compiled by the Harvard School of Public Health's Injury Control Center.

Although America's political debate about guns tends to focus on grisly mass shootings and murders, a majority of gun-related deaths in the U.S. are suicides.

Research that shows greater access to guns dramatically increases the risk of suicide.

The states with the most guns report the most suicides.

Perhaps the reason access to guns so strongly contributes to suicides is that guns are much deadlier than alternatives like cutting and poison.

Reducing access to guns can be so important to preventing suicides: stalling an attempt or making it less likely to result in death makes a huge difference—it opens the opportunity for someone to help or for the suicidal person to reach out to someone to help.

That is why limiting access to lethal means is so powerful.

Since police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, on August 9, 2014, police have killed at least 2,902 people as of May 2017.

Given that states with more guns tend to have more homicides, it is not too surprising that, as a study in the American Journal of Public Health found, states with more guns also have more cops die in the line of duty.

Researchers looked at federal data for firearm ownership and homicides of police officers across the U.S. over 15 years.

They found that states with more gun ownership had more cops killed in homicides: Every 10 percent increase in firearm ownership correlated with 10 additional officers killed in homicides over the 15-year study period.

The findings could help explain why U.S. police officers appear to kill more people than cops in other developed countries.

For police officers, the higher rates of guns and gun violence in America means they not only will encounter more guns and violence, but they can expect to encounter more guns and deadly violence, making them more likely to anticipate and perceive a threat and use deadly force as a result.

Over the past 20 years, Americans have clearly shifted from supporting gun control measures to greater support of ''protecting the right of Americans to own guns.''

This shift has happened even as major mass shootings, such as the attacks on Columbine High School and Sandy Hook Elementary School, have received more press attention.

Although mass shootings are often viewed as some of the worst acts of gun violence, they seem to have little effect on public opinion about gun rights.

That helps explain why Americans' support for the right to own guns appears to be rising over the past 20 years even as more of these mass shootings make it to the news.

Although Americans say they want to protect the right to bear arms, they are very much supportive of many gun policy proposals—including some fairly contentious ideas, such as more background checks on private and gun show sales and banning semi-automatic and assault-style weapons.

This type of contradiction is not exclusive to gun policy issues.

For example, although most Americans in the past said they do not support Obamacare, but most of them also said they like the specific policies in the health-care law.

On average, 7 children and adolescents lose their lives to gun violence each day, 75 percent of which are under the age of 12 years old.

So many people die annually from gun violence in the United States that the death toll between 1968 and 2011 eclipses the total lives lost in all the armed conflicts in the history of the United States.

On June 7, 2015, a gunman shot and killed nine people at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church Charleston, South Carolina, one of the oldest and largest black congregations in the South.

On November 11, 2009, at Fort Hood, near Killeen, Texas, a gunman shot and killed 13 people, and wounded 30 others.

On August 5, 2012 in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, a gunman shot and killed six people, and injured three others, at the Sikh Temple of Oak Creek.

On July 7, 2015 in Chattanooga, Tennessee a gunman shot and killed five people, including two U.S. Marines and a Naval Officer, and shot and injured two others at a recruiting center and U.S. Naval Reserve Center.

On December 2, 2015 in San Bernardino, California, two gunmen killed 14 people and injured 21 others at the Inland Regional Center.

On December 14, 2012, a gunman murdered 26 persons, including 20 children and 6 school administrators and teachers, at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut.

On August 8, 2015, a gunman brutally murdered his ex-girlfriend and her six children and husband in one of the most notorious cases of domestic violence in the history of Houston, Texas.

On April 16, 2007, a gunman killed 32 persons and injured 17 others at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Mass shootings occur more frequently in states that do not require background checks for all gun sales.

Analyses of mass shootings in the United States between 2009 and 2015 document that the majority of mass shootings occur in venues where the carrying of firearm is not restricted.

In states that require background checks for all handgun sales, including guns offered in unlicensed sales online and at gun shows, there are 52 percent fewer mass shootings.

Congress must take action to prevent other incidents such as the recent act of terror and hatred in Las Vegas, Nevada that resulted in the tragic loss of 58 innocent lives.

We extend our deepest sympathies to all those affected by this tragedy and recognize the skill and heroism of the law enforcement officers and first responders who came to the aid of others.

We commend the efforts of those who are working to care for the injured and investigate this horrific incident.

We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to the families of the fallen, and to all those affected in the community of Las Vegas and in the United States.

And I pledge to continue to work to reduce gun violence and prevent mass shooting.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, as we have heard so eloquently from my colleagues, everyone agrees that we should keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. But, in fact, this House and this administration have been moving in the opposite direction.

Just last week, hundreds of Americans whose loved ones had been killed by guns in the last few years came to Washington for a long-planned memorial vigil, a national vigil, to honor those whose lives had been taken from us from gun violence. On that very day, this House decided to call up an offensive dangerous piece of legislation on concealed carry permits.

This bill will make it easier for domestic violence abusers to pursue their victims across State lines carrying loaded concealed weapons into States that do not allow that, overriding the choices of States like mine in Connecticut that have strict laws to protect domestic violence victims, who are five times more likely to be killed if there is a gun in the household.

That is why my State has taken action to protect women and children from death by gun from domestic abusers. But now my State—if this law gets passed by the Senate and signed by the President—my State's choices will be overridden. The law enforcement in my State will be at greater risk.

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That is not protecting the American people. That is putting them at risk.

Recently, the administration decided to take the names of all fugitives. One of the categories of those who are not permitted legally to own weapons are people who are fugitives from justice. It seems like a fairly sensible rule, just like it is a sensible rule to not have those who are believed to be terrorists to legally purchase guns.

Yet, this administration recently took tens of thousands of names of people who have been on the National Instant Criminal Background Check System as prohibited from purchasing a gun legally. Because of their criminal history, the fact that they are fugitives from justice, tens of thousands of those names have been taken out of the records. They have been sent back to the States, saying they should look at them again.

In so doing, how long is it going to be before one of those dangerous people buys a gun because the name is no longer in the system?

And who knows if it is going to be your child or your child or your loved

one or your neighbor. That is not what we are sent here to do.

The families of Newtown have persevered. Despite all odds, they have found the courage to get up every day. Some are pursuing brain research to figure out how to encourage empathy. Some have written beautiful music, composed poetry. Some have started programs in schools to teach children how to be kind to each other. Some have stepped forward as extraordinary citizen activists and come to Washington and pound the halls, the marbled halls of State capitols around the country. They are true American heroes fighting for what they believe in and a better society.

And some, in some ways I think the bravest among them, have chosen to bring new children into this world—the sort of optimism and courage that I can't fathom if my child at 6 or 7 years old had been gunned down in those classrooms in the Sandy Hook Elementary School. But if they can have that resolve and that courage and that faith in this country, so can we.

A good and a great nation takes care of its citizens. A good and a great nation responds to the cries of the people. A good and a great nation, above all, protects its children.

Madam Speaker, we have the opportunity to do that. Thoughts and prayers and moments of silence are not enough. The American people deserve action. When I get on a plane tomorrow to fly back to Connecticut to attend memorial services on the 5-year anniversary of those tragic and shocking murders of children in Sandy Hook Elementary School, I would like to be able to tell them that we are doing our job and our duty in this House by taking action and honoring their memories with truly taking action to protect them.

I want to thank my colleagues for joining me here tonight.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the State of Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO), my colleague.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues who are here this evening. I also want to thank my colleague, Congresswoman ESTY, for her indomitable efforts and work in making sure that we focus our time and our attention to the prevention of gun violence.

Madam Speaker, I rise to honor and to commemorate the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, 5 years ago. We lost 20 beautiful innocent children and 6 wonderful caring adults. While the grief and pain of the families who lost a loved one at Sandy Hook endures, we can all find hope and strength in the resilience of Newtown, and, together, we must honor their loss with action.

Tonight, I want to share an essay from ''Bullets into Bells: Poets and Citizens Respond to Gun Violence.'' Abbey Clements, a teacher at Sandy Hook, wrote the following: ''154 shots. They heard them all. I thought they were folding chairs falling. We huddled into the coats and backpacks. Some of them cried. Some of them laughed—how could they know? And if they knew, how could they believe? We shared a water bottle, a blue one, passing it around. Little arms poking out to take it. We waited. We had to believe the police were who they said they were. I opened the door. They scattered. A few in my outstretched arms. We ran. We were lucky. Surviving is a gift and a burden. What do you do with that?

''For me, as soon as I could, I started to fight. I fight to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. I fight to keep guns locked up and away from curious toddlers and depressed teens. I fight against arming teachers, and I fight to keep guns out of college dorms and classrooms. Lockdowns, active-shooter drills, and backpacks that morph into shields aren't the answer.

''Parents shouldn't have to worry about whether or not their kids will make it home from school. A year or two after the tragedy, one mom told me that, every day after school, she left a gift for her daughter sitting on her bed—a celebration for making it home.''

Those are the words of Abbey Clements, a teacher at Sandy Hook.

It is our job to make sure that those children get home safe from school. We have the ability to do that in this institution. What we need is the will to do it.

Again, I thank my colleague, Congresswoman ESTY, for her leadership in this effort.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Connecticut for her stirring words. Abbey Clements is an extraordinary woman, and her daughter, Sarah, is now a college student here in Washington and is helping take up that charge of being one of the citizen activists and one of the citizen leaders who understands that democracies empower and charge us to correct that which is wrong.

What is happening in this country is wrong. These are not tragedies from above. These are not natural disasters. These are man-made tragedies and man-made deaths, and it is up to us to do better.

Again, I want to thank my colleagues for joining me here this evening. I will take their wishes, their words, their energy, their passion, and their commitment to action back with me to Newtown tomorrow evening.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

## LETTER SUPPORTING SPECIAL COUNSEL ROBERT S. MUELLER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. HANDEL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Speaker, for the past several days, there has been an organized attempt to discredit and undermine the work of Special Counsel Robert Mueller. I rise today to speak on behalf of many Members of Congress who believe Special Counsel Mueller is doing a great job.

At this time, I am circulating a letter, and other Members of Congress are joining me. This is a letter of support for Special Counsel Mueller urging that he not be interfered with and that he is allowed to continue this very important investigation in the interest of the security of our country.

I will be circulating this letter for another 24 hours. However, at this time, I would like to read the contents of the letter into the RECORD. This, again, is a letter in support of Special Counsel Mueller. The letter is addressed to the Honorable Rod J. Rosenstein, Deputy Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice.

The letter reads as follows:

Dear Deputy Attorney General,

We write to express our support for the work of Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller, III, and to urge you to ensure that he be allowed to continue his investigation—unfettered by political influence or threats to his authority—to its natural and appropriate conclusion based on the law, the facts, and the evidence.

The Special Counsel is Conducting a Methodical Investigation, Yielding Results.

It is unimaginable that Republicans would seek to intervene, discredit, obstruct, or terminate the special counsel's investigation. Thus far, from every public indication, it appears that Mr. Mueller is conducting a thorough and methodical investigation. He and his investigators have not sought, and instead avoided, the public spotlight. His team has not leaked or hinted at criminal allegations for which they have yet to develop charges. Furthermore, the charges that have been filed to date have been sufficiently strong and well founded as to elicit guilty pleas from President Donald Trump's former National Security Advisor, Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, and a former policy adviser to Donald Trump's Presidential campaign, George Papadopoulos.

The Appointment of a Special Counsel Was Necessary and Proper.

As you know, pursuant to U.S. Department of Justice Order Number 3915–2017, which you issued on May 17, 2017, Mr. Mueller was appointed to serve as special counsel and authorized to conduct an investigation into matters, ''including any links and/or coordination between the Russian Government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald Trump; and any matters that arose or may arise directly from the investigation; and any other matters within the scope of 28 CFR 600.4(a),'' which includes ''authority to investigate and prosecute Federal crimes committed in the course of, and

with intent to interfere with, the special counsel's investigation, such as perjury, obstruction of justice, destruction of evidence, and intimidation of witnesses.''

□ 1945

Your decision to appoint a special counsel to conduct such an investigation was necessary and proper, given the U.S. intelligence community's assessment that ''Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. Presidential election, the consistent goals of which were to undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process'' and that ''Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President Trump''; the obvious potential that individuals, who had served on President Donald J. Trump's campaign, as well as individuals currently serving as political appointees in the Trump administration, could be targets of, or witnesses in, any such investigation; and Attorney General Jeff Sessions recused himself from ''any matters related in any way to the campaigns for President of the United States.''

The Selection of Robert S. Mueller III to Serve As Special Counsel Was Very Much Appropriate.

Under the circumstances described above, your selection of Robert Mueller to serve as the special counsel to conduct the investigation was an appropriate and commendable decision. Mr. Mueller has earned a reputation as a nonpartisan, professional investigator, making him an ideal choice to lead the investigation into the highly important, complex, and sensitive matters to which he has been charged. Mr. Mueller's record demonstrates that he would not allow bias, influence, or other extraneous considerations to impact his investigation, and any suggestion otherwise is just not credible.

Mr. Mueller is a former Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI, who was originally appointed by a Republican President. He was vetted and, twice, unanimously confirmed by the Senate. Specifically, when appointed in 2001 by President George W. Bush, Mueller was confirmed as FBI Director by a vote of 98–0 in the Senate, and when Mueller was nominated for a second term, in 2011, during President Barack Obama's administration, he was again unanimously confirmed in the Senate by a vote of 100–0.

Mr. Mueller has earned bipartisan support. Republican Members of the Senate attested to Mr. Mueller's integrity and professionalism during Mr. Mueller's confirmation hearings, which took place on July 30 and 31, 2001. For example, with regard to Mr. Mueller's nomination to serve as FBI Director, then Senator, now Attorney General, Jeff Sessions stated:

''It is great to see Mr. Mueller, nominated to take one of the most important positions in our country. It is a position that requires, in my view, serious experience, great integrity, and a proven record of accomplishment. And you have all of those things, Robert Mueller. When I was in the Department of Justice, Robert Mueller's reputation was known throughout the Department of Justice, and he was known not for any political reason, but because he was recognized as a professional's professional, a man whose skill at doing the job assigned to him was second to none. There is no doubt in my mind that there is no more professional prosecutor, no more professional person in America with experience in the Department of Justice, ready to handle the job of FBI Director than Robert Mueller.''

Likewise, Senator MITCH MCCONNELL stated: ''I believe Mr. Mueller will provide strong and effective leadership. Mr. Mueller has both impressive management and law enforcement experience. He is well-schooled in avoiding the problems and pitfalls inherent in criminal investigations and prosecutions. Mr. Mueller is not 'of' the FBI, and therefore I believe institutional loyalty will not blind him to making the hard'' decision he needs to make.

Senator MCCONNELL also expressed his belief that Mr. Mueller's commitment ''to vigorously enforcing the law without regard to politics or partisanship.''

Speaker of the House PAUL RYAN has also commented on Mr. Mueller's lack of partisan bias. As reported in a July 24, 2017, Washington Examiner article, Speaker RYAN said: ''I don't think many people are saying Robert Mueller is a biased partisan. He's really, sort of, anything but.''

On October 11, 2017, Kenneth Starr, who was appointed in 1994 as the independent counsel who was tasked with investigations involving President Bill Clinton and then First Lady Hillary Clinton, commented on Robert Mueller and the manner in which his investigation is proceeding. Mr. Starr stated that Mr. Mueller is conducting his investigation ''aggressively and professionally.'' Mr. Starr also stated: ''We're not seeing 'leaks' out of the investigation as far as we know, and what we know of Bob Mueller and his background is that he is someone of total, rock-ribbed integrity.''

Regulations Limiting the Removal of a Special Counsel Must Be Followed.

Mr. Mueller must be allowed to complete his investigation and should not be threatened with removal. However, a few Republicans have indicated their support for Mr. Mueller, for his ouster. Notwithstanding the overwhelming reasons for Mr. Mueller to be allowed to continue and complete his investigation, the rule of law demands that the Trump administration follow executive branch regulations, which restrict the circumstances under which a special counsel can be removed. Specifically, 28 CFR 600.7(d) regarding the removal or discipline of a special counsel provides: ''The special counsel may be disciplined or removed from office only by the personal action of the Attorney General. The Attorney General may remove a special counsel for misconduct, dereliction of duty, incapacity, conflict of interest, or for other good cause, including violation of departmental policies. The Attorney General shall inform the special counsel in writing of the specific reason for his or her removal.''

Since Attorney General Sessions is recused, you, in your capacity as acting Attorney General—that is, Mr. Rosenstein—regarding Special Counsel Mueller's investigation, are the only individual empowered to remove Mr. Mueller under regulation. Furthermore, the regulation clearly states that Mr. Mueller may only be removed for good cause, which has not been demonstrated. The administration is required to follow its own regulations and not remove Mr. Mueller from his investigation.

Politically Motivated Challenges of Special Counsel Mueller and His Investigation Must Not Be Allowed to Threaten the Investigation.

Despite Special Counsel Mueller's investigation of integrity, as attested to by these Republican leaders, and despite the clear progress that Mr. Mueller is making in his investigation, the rightwing media, some Republican Members of Congress, and Donald Trump, himself, have attempted to advance a false narrative that Special Counsel Mueller's investigation is biased—this is what they say—and some have advocated for Mr. Mueller's removal. On June 15, 2017, referring in general terms to the Russia investigation, President Trump stated on social media: ''You are witnessing the single greatest witch hunt in American political history—led by some very bad and conflicted people.''

In Congress, four Republican Members, led by Representative MATT GAETZ and including former Representative Trent Franks, who has now resigned amidst an Ethics Committee investigation into his own conduct, have cosponsored a resolution calling for Mueller to step down. Those Members have attempted to advance baseless claims of the existence of a conflict due to Mr. Mueller's previous service as FBI Director. Those arguments do not have merit, and appear intended, at best, to redirect the public's focus toward matters that are wholly unrelated to the investigation to which Mr. Mueller has been tasked. At worst, those arguments are intended to stop or preemptively tarnish the perception of the special counsel's work. The issues referenced in that Republican resolution pertain to allegations against former President Bill Clinton and former Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton related to a 2009–2010 matter, which has nothing to do with Mr. Mueller's directive to investigate ''links and/or coordination between the Russian Government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald Trump.''

As quoted in a December 12, 2017, Politico article, Representative MATT GAETZ stated that he told President Trump that he was ''concerned'' that Mr. Mueller's investigation ''was infected with bias.'' Representative GAETZ said the President responded: ''That's why you guys have got to do your job.'' Representative GAETZ further stated that he informed the President that you would be testifying—that is, Mr. Rosenstein—before the House Judiciary Committee on December 13, 2017, in response to which Representative GAETZ said President Trump ''encouraged us to exercise our oversight responsibilities.'' This conversation, as described by Representative GAETZ, suggests that President Trump is encouraging the ring leaders of the recent criticisms against Mr. Mueller in order to pressure you to affect the investigation through the congressional oversight process. That is unacceptable.

Some have alleged that Mr. Mueller's removal of a member of this team, Peter Strzok, over text messages sent by Mr. Strzok that were critical of President Trump suggests bias or a lack of objectivity on the special counsel's team. However, upon learning of the text messages, Mr. Mueller immediately removed Mr. Strzok from the investigation. In reality, this incident and Mr. Mueller's swift response demonstrates Mr. Mueller's integrity as well as his desire and commitment to conduct an investigation that is beyond reproach.

You must not allow the targets of the investigation, or issues being investigated, to escape thorough independent inquiry through the removal, or hindrance, of the special counsel. We thank you, Mr. Rosenstein, for your careful attention to this matter, and we stand ready to support you in upholding the rule of law.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is the letter that I am circulating to Mr. Rosenstein. This is the letter that is being signed on by other Members of Congress. This is the letter that I will circulate for the next 24 hours so that we will give Members the opportunity to sign on to this letter.

□ 2000

This letter should be on your desk very soon.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio, Representative MARCY KAPTUR, who signed up to speak here this evening.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlewoman and ranking member of the Financial Services Committee for this very important Special Order and for her incredible work in assuring justice in our country on so many, many fronts.

Madam Speaker, I rise tonight because of deep concern regarding our Republican colleagues on the Judiciary Committee who are attempting to kick the legs out from under Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russia's meddling in our elections last year.

Yes, they called Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein to testify on whether bias has tainted that investigation.

You know what is interesting about this?

All of the intelligence agencies of our country agree that there was more than meddling in last year's elections.

I actually pray for Robert Mueller every night because what the involvement of Russia in our elections has meant, you know, that's not a country that really welcomes debate and open conversation. They kill their enemies.

Robert Mueller is going to get at the very core of what Russia is doing not just in our country, but what it will instruct us Russia is doing in Europe and many other places around the world.

I listened to some of our colleagues on the Judiciary Committee today, and I just want to put this on the record: Robert Mueller has given his life to this country through his entire years of service.

I have never personally sat to dinner with this man or I don't think I have even shaken his hand, but I admire him for his true patriotism.

I watched some of the individuals on the Judiciary Committee today and wondered if they knew that he had been in the Marine Corps during Vietnam. He actually rose to the level of captain. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with the Combat V for victory. He is the recipient of the Purple Heart. He was a Navy and Marine Corps captain and got the Commendation Medal for his valor in combat.

How many of those individuals questioning his integrity can even compare to that with their little fingernail?

Combat Action Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross. That was his early career.

As an attorney, he went into service to our country as an assistant U.S. district attorney on one coast, and then on the other coast as U.S. district attorney.

He is very evenhanded, and he worked his way up then in the Justice Department, rising to the level of Deputy Attorney General. He had been an Assistant Attorney General. His entire life has been spent in dangerous jobs.

To take on Russia, you put your own life in someone else's hands, actually. I can read a list—but I won't tonight—of all of the leaders and rising leaders of countries that wish to be free that Russia has summarily killed, for which there is no justice.

Madam Speaker, I rise somewhat out of outrage tonight listening to some of our colleagues here who demanded that we disband Special Counsel Mueller's investigation. Counsel Mueller is a Republican. I should not like him for that reason, right, because I am a Democrat? But I know there is something bigger to him, and that is defending the American people against all enemies, foreign and domestic. He has put his life on the line since he was a teenager for this country.

Our country was founded on the principle of equality under the law. Our democracy, in the safeguarding of those principles, depends on genuine free elections. Not only must we pass laws here that assure that, but they have to be enforced.

We have to unequivocally confirm the truth behind the extent of Russian meddling in our election. That is what we need. We know they did. Now we want to know every piece of it.

How did they hack those voting machines? How did they use special ads that appeared around the country targeted to special audiences?

We have to restore the faith of the American people in their very vote in order to maintain this democratic republic.

Throughout his career, Special Counsel Mueller has proven himself time and time and time and time again to be a man of integrity.

I might say, this comes from a woman who tried to become an FBI agent when she was in college and was rejected not because she didn't have the academic abilities, but because in those days they didn't admit women to the FBI. Times have changed a lot, but I know that Robert Mueller is the best that America has.

Due process is one of the most carefully guarded of our constitutional protections, and we must see this investigation through to its ultimate end.

There can be no chicken hawks in this House or those who point fingers whose careers do not demonstrate the kind of patriotism Robert Mueller has demonstrated throughout his career.

Madam Speaker, I was actually shocked at how the questioning went this afternoon without the kind of respect and understanding of what it takes to preserve a republic that is free and independent of outside meddling.

I want to thank the gentlewoman for allowing me to speak. I am embarrassed at some of the questions that the Republican majority has been hammering over in the Judiciary Committee and some of the other committees as the investigation intensifies and becomes more complete. The American people have a right to know.

I guess the question every American has to ask: In whose hands would you place your life? A man who has served this country, who is now, I believe, 73 years old—over 70 years old?

He has proved everything, but he has proven also that he has been a total patriot.

I would ask the same of those who so frivolously waste their words in efforts to try to suppress an investigation that we know is essential to the preservation of our vote and our freedoms.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Speaker, I yield to Representative JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me and for her leadership on this very important issue.

She is standing in the gap because all that we have heard from Republicans and their media advocates is that their intention, of course, is to create a 21st century Saturday night massacre.

In my questioning of the Deputy Attorney General, that is the exact terminology that I utilized, which is: Was the Deputy Attorney General and the Department of Justice prepared to defend Special Counsel Mueller against a potential Saturday night massacre?

Of course, that is the Watergate massacre perpetrated by President Nixon in firing the Attorney General, and then requiring and firing the special prosecutor and—getting someone to fire—literally creating a institutional crisis.

Madam Speaker, it is clear, as evidenced by the words of Sean Hannity on December 5, FOX News, who led off his broadcast with the outrageous charge that Mueller is frankly a disgrace by the American justice system and has put the country now on the brink of becoming a banana republic.

Not surprisingly, disgraced former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who enthusiastically praised the appointment of Robert Mueller as special counsel as a superb choice to be special counsel because his reputation is impeccable for honesty and integrity, has done a complete 180-degree turn and now declaims falsely that the very top at the Justice Department and the FBI have become corrupt.

I was pleased to join this letter and to join with Congresswoman WATERS, along with my other colleagues, for a very important statement.

I also believe that this statement must be backed up with legislation, such as H.R. 3654, which I have offered, the Special Counsel Independence Protection Act.

But basically I think we have a situation where if we do not make this a public announcement of indicating that between the administration, the President, and others, along with Republicans in this House, there is an entrapment being set up for Special Counsel Mueller to be considered biased because of the staffing actions of which, by the way, those individuals have been replaced or they have been transferred to other positions.

There is no doubt that a man who served in Vietnam, a man who came

back to the Justice Department as an entry-level employee to be able to serve his country, there is no question that there is no evidence of any corruption.

Madam Speaker, I would conclude my remarks by saying the importance of this legislation and this letter is because Director Mueller is working his way into the White House, and the issues of Russian collusion and the issues dealing with criminality are approaching the front door. We must protect this investigation.

Madam Speaker, in recent days, the shrill but politically-charged attacks on Special Counsel Robert Mueller have reached a deafening roar.

For example, on December 5, Fox News host Sean Hannity led off his broadcast with the outrageous charge that 'Mueller is frankly a disgrace to the American justice system and has put the country now on the brink of becoming a banana republic.

Not surprisingly, disgraced former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, who enthusiastically praised the appointment of Robert Mueller as Special Counsel as a 'superb choice to be special counsel' because 'his reputation is impeccable for honesty and integrity' has done a complete 180-degree turn and now declaims falsely that at "the very top, the Justice Department and the FBI became corrupted."

These despicable accusations by Trump acolytes and ultraconservative zealots against a distinguished public servant and veteran who has served his country with honor and unimpeachable integrity for more than a half-century are outrageous.

But the public sees them for what they are: a thinly disguised attempt by a panicked White House and its right-wing media allies to inflame and persuade base Trump supporters to question the impartiality of the Special Counsel's investigation that daily uncovers more evidence of wrongdoing and collusion by operatives of the Trump campaign, transition, and White House.

In light of the barrage of baseless attacks against Special Counsel Mueller by Trump apologists and right-wing media, it is urgent that Congress act immediately to protect the independence and integrity of Special Counsel Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential election, including questions surrounding collusion between Russian operatives and Trump campaign officials.

That is why I am calling upon the House leadership to bring H.R. 3654, the 'Special Counsel Independence Protection Act,' to the floor for debate and a vote by the full House at the earliest time possible.

This legislation, which I introduced on August 15, 2017, insulates the Special Counsel from the whims of this President by permitting the removal of the Special Counsel only where:

The attorney general files an action in federal district court in Washington, D.C., and files a contemporaneous action with the House Judiciary Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee; and

A panel of three federal judges sitting in Washington, D.C., finds removal appropriate based on a finding of misconduct, dereliction of duty, incapacity, conflict of interest or other good cause.

We are on the verge of a constitutional crisis as Trump operatives try to dismantle, destroy, and undermine Special Counsel Mueller's investigation.

This cannot be allowed to happen.

The state of our democracy hinges upon our ability to ensure the integrity of our elections and the rule of law.

And the necessary and ongoing work of the Special Counsel must be insulated against outside influence and interference.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Speaker, I thank both of the Members of Congress who came down here this evening and shared in the information that we are going to forward to Rod Rosenstein because it is so important that we let him know that our special counsel has support. We appreciate what he is doing and we are going to stand with him.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. SENSENBRENNER (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of illness.

## ADJOURNMENT

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, December 14, 2017, at 9 a.m.

## EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

3374. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Sedaxane; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0537; FRL-9970-04] received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3375. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Indoxacarb; Pesticide Tolerances [EPA-HQ-OPP-2017-0095; FRL-9970-39] received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3376. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Findings of Failure to Submit State Implementation Plan Submittals for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) [EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0667; FRL-9971-66-OAR] received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3377. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Financial Responsibility Requirements under CERCLA Section 108(b) for Classes of Facilities in the Hardrock Mining Industry [EPA-HQ-SFUND-2015-0781; FRL-9971-50-OLEM] (RIN: 2050-AG61) received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3378. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Bacillus Subtilis strain BU1814; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2016-0687; FRL-9969-96] received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3379. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; Revisions to Emissions Banking and Trading Programs for Area and Mobile Sources [EPA-R06-OAR-2017-0192; FRL-9971-04-Region 6] received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3380. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; New York; Reasonably Available Control Technology for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards [EPA-R02-OAR-2017-0459; FRL-9971-83-Region 2] received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3381. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Delaware; Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT) State Implementation Plan (SIP) Under the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) [EPA-R03-OAR-2015-0656; FRL-9971-58-Region 3], pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3382. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's withdrawal of direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; Ohio; Redesignation of the Fulton County Area to Attainment of the 2008 Lead Standard [EPA-R05-OAR-2017-0256; FRL-9971-74-Region 5] received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3383. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Air Plan Approval; Minnesota; 2008 Ozone Transport [EPA-R05-OAR-2016-0327; FRL-9971-61-Region 5] received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3384. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's withdrawal of direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; Illinois; Redesignation of the Chicago and Granite City Areas to Attainment of the 2008 Lead Standard [EPA-R05-OAR-2016-0593; FRL-9971-77-Region 5] received December 6, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3385. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 22-201, ''Business Improvement Districts Tax Exemption Temporary Amendment Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3386. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 22-203, ''Southwest Waterfront Park Bus Prohibition Temporary Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3387. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 22-200, ''Government Employer-Assisted Housing Temporary Amendment Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3388. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 22-199, ''Medical Respite Services Exemption Temporary Amendment Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

3389. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting D.C. ACT 22-198, ''Public Employee Relations Board Term Limit Temporary Amendment Act of 2017'', pursuant to Public Law 93-198, Sec. 602(c)(1); (87 Stat. 814); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. HENSARLING: Committee on Financial Services. H.R. 4258. A bill to promote the development of local strategies to coordinate use of assistance under sections 8 and 9 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 with public and private resources, to enable eligible families to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–464. Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

## PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. COFFMAN (for himself and Ms. ESTY of Connecticut):

H.R. 4635. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the number of peer-to-peer counselors providing counseling for women veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. LEE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. NADLER, Mr. POCAN, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. POLIS, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. MCNERNEY):

H.R. 4636. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain provisions of the renewable energy credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. KIND (for himself and Mr. REICHERT):

H.R. 4637. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage retirement savings by modifying requirements with respect to employer-established IRAs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. NORTON, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire):

H.R. 4638. A bill to establish a National Commission on Fibrotic Diseases; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 4639. A bill to amend title 10 United States Code, to establish a punitive article in the Uniform Code of Military Justice on domestic violence, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TAYLOR (for himself, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia):

H.R. 4640. A bill to designate public colleges and universities that provide research, data, and recommendations on physical science, social science, economic analysis, policy analysis, risk analysis, monitoring, predicting, and planning for coastal flooding as National Centers of Excellence in Coastal Flood Research and Education; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN:

H.J. Res. 124. A joint resolution making further additional continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations, and in addition to the Committees on the Budget, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WILSON of South Carolina:

H. Res. 662. A resolution emphasizing disapproval of six anti-Israel United Nations resolutions and reaffirming United States support for the State of Israel and its people; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. JONES (for himself, Mr. LYNCH, and Mr. MASSIE):

H. Res. 663. A resolution urging the release of information regarding the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks upon the United States; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. LANCE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. SIRES, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Mr. CURBELO of Florida):

H. Res. 664. A resolution calling for the immediate extradition or rendering to the United States of convicted felons William Morales, Joanne Chesimard, and all other fugitives from justice who are receiving safe harbor in Cuba in order to escape prosecution or confinement for criminal offenses committed in the United States; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

## PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Ms. BROWNLEY of California introduced a bill (H.R. 4641) to authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to John L. Canley for acts of valor during the Vietnam War while a member of the Marine Corps; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. COFFMAN:

H.R. 4635.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Ms. SCHAKOWSKY:

H.R. 4636.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 7

By Mr. KIND:

H.R. 4637.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 7, Clause 1

''All Bills for raising Revenue shall orginate in the House of Representatives''

By Mr. KING of New York:

H.R. 4638.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Ms. ROSEN:

H.R. 4639.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18 of the U.S. Constitution: To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years; To provide and maintain a Navy; To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces; To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions; To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress; To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. TAYLOR:

H.R. 4640.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and Post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

and Offenses against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings; And

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN:

H.J. Res. 124.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The principal constitutional authority for this legislation is clause 7 of section 9 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (the appropriation power), which states: ''No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law . . . .'' In addition, clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution (the spending power) provides: ''The Congress shall have the Power . . . to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States . . . .'' Together, these specific constitutional provisions establish the congressional power of the purse, granting Congress the authority to appropriate funds, to determine their purpose, amount, and period of availability, and to set forth terms and conditions governing their use.

By Ms. BROWNLEY of California:

H.R. 4641

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

## ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 140: Mr. SANFORD.

H.R. 173: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Ms. MCSALLY, and Mr. WESTERMAN.

H.R. 495: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.

H.R. 545: Mr. NEWHOUSE.

H.R. 632: Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. RUSH, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. FUDGE, and Ms. BASS.

H.R. 667: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas and Mr. KIND.

H.R. 747: Ms. ADAMS.

H.R. 785: Mr. THORNBERRY.

H.R. 858: Mr. ELLISON, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. PANETTA.

H.R. 909: Mr. ROUZER.

H.R. 912: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York and Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 913: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 947: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 1134: Mr. BERA.

H.R. 1155: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.

H.R. 1272: Mr. CLAY.

H.R. 1314: Ms. MCSALLY.

H.R. 1456: Mr. STIVERS and Mr. LARSEN of Washington.

H.R. 1457: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1555: Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 1569: Mr. PERLMUTTER.

H.R. 1615: Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. KHANNA, and Mr. NORCROSS.

H.R. 1720: Mr. FASO.

H.R. 1818: Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. MARINO, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

H.R. 1889: Ms. SÁNCHEZ.

H.R. 1970: Ms. MENG.

H.R. 1987: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 1997: Mr. SIRES and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 2166: Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 2234: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Mr. DENHAM.

H.R. 2293: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 2317: Mr. RUIZ.

H.R. 2436: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 2472: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 2616: Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 2657: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 2687: Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. PINGREE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Mr. CUMMINGS.

H.R. 2913: Mr. PANETTA.

H.R. 2946: Mr. GIBBS.

H.R. 3409: Mr. FLORES.

H.R. 3444: Mr. SWALWELL of California and Ms. MCCOLLUM.

H.R. 3495: Mr. LYNCH, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 3596: Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. GABBARD, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. SIMPSON, and Mr. MAST.

H.R. 3600: Mr. HARRIS.

H.R. 3637: Mr. BLUMENAUER and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 3730: Mr. ELLISON, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Ms. MENG.

H.R. 3738: Mr. RUSH, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. BARRAGÁN, and Ms. HANABUSA.

H.R. 3767: Mr. BARR.

H.R. 3776: Mr. MEADOWS.

H.R. 3848: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 3851: Mr. POE of Texas and Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 3881: Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. SHERMAN.

H.R. 3923: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 4007: Mr. COSTA, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. RUSH, and Mr. MACARTHUR.

H.R. 4061: Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH, Mr. BUDD, Mr. LOUDERMILK, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER.

H.R. 4077: Ms. SINEMA and Mr. JONES.

H.R. 4078: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. CUELLAR, and Mr. PALAZZO.

H.R. 4133: Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 4143: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. CORREA, and Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 4144: Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 4152: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 4163: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 4219: Mr. MITCHELL and Mr. BYRNE.

H.R. 4223: Mr. LANCE.

H.R. 4240: Mr. LEVIN.

H.R. 4265: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 4274: Mrs. LOVE.

H.R. 4306: Mr. KIND.

H.R. 4340: Mr. ROKITA.

H.R. 4360: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 4369: Ms. BORDALLO.

H.R. 4372: Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 4391: Mr. RUSH.

H.R. 4396: Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. DOGGETT, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. DELAURO, Mrs. LOWEY, and Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 4413: Mr. CALVERT and Mr. CONAWAY.

H.R. 4443: Ms. BONAMICI.

H.R. 4444: Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, and Ms. LEE.

H.R. 4459: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 4494: Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. KNIGHT, Mr. BOST, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. CONAWAY, and Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 4505: Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 4510: Mr. O'HALLERAN.

H.R. 4541: Mr. RASKIN, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. TONKO, Mr. KHANNA, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 4547: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 4548: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. SIRES, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 4572: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. PLASKETT, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. AL GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 4582: Mrs. BUSTOS.

H.R. 4585: Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. DELANEY, and Mr. DEUTCH.

H.R. 4589: Mr. GOMEZ.

H.R. 4608: Ms. MOORE.

H.R. 4614: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 4617: Mr. MESSER, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, and Mr. KATKO.

H. Con. Res. 28: Mr. ISSA, Mr. VALADAO, and Mr. LANCE.

H. Con. Res. 81: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

H. Res. 69: Ms. ROSEN.

H. Res. 443: Mrs. LOVE.

H. Res. 464: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H. Res. 466: Mr. MCCAUL.

H. Res. 477: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.

H. Res. 570: Mr. DESANTIS.

H. Res. 603: Mr. DONOVAN.

United States of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017 No. 203

# Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

## PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, thank You that our life's pilgrimage is a process and discovery. Open our eyes today that we may see wonderful things in Your precepts, gaining wisdom from Your world. Help our lawmakers to strive to ensure that their thoughts, words, and deeds will please You. Today, we surrender to Your providence, trusting You to order our steps. Lord, teach us to illuminate our world with the wisdom of Your Divine insights, so that Your will may be done on Earth. Transform life's deserts so that they will blossom like roses. Bring flowing springs to the parched grounds of our lives, so that we may live abundantly.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

## RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The majority leader is recognized.

## NOMINATION OF JAMES HO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this week, the Senate is continuing to consider President Trump's outstanding judicial nominees. Yesterday, we confirmed a talented individual to be a circuit court judge, and soon we will confirm another. Next, we will advance the nomination of James Ho to be a judge of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Ho is another well-qualified individual, and, like all of President Trump's judicial nominees, he is dedicated to upholding the rule of law and serving as an impartial arbiter on the bench.

Similar to Justice Willett, whom I discussed yesterday, Mr. Ho has an inspirational story. Immigrating to the United States from Taiwan at the age of 1, he learned English by watching ''Sesame Street.'' He went on to graduate from the University of Chicago Law School with high honors and earned a clerkship with Judge Jerry E. Smith of the Fifth Circuit. In 2001, Mr. Ho joined the Department of Justice as the Special Assistant to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights and later worked in the Office of Legal Counsel. In addition to his service in the executive branch, he worked here in the Senate as chief counsel for the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution. Afterward, he went across the street to clerk for Associate Justice Clarence Thomas.

After his distinguished and successful legal career in Washington, Mr. Ho returned to Texas, joining a top law firm and specializing in appellate litigation. He then served as the solicitor general of Texas, succeeding our colleague Senator TED CRUZ. It was while he was serving in that role that he won the Supreme Court Best Brief Award from the National Association of Attorneys General. He went on to earn the award two more times. After his time in State government, Mr. Ho returned to his private practice firm and currently serves as the cochair of its appellate and constitutional law group. He has presented oral arguments in State and Federal courts around the country, including the Supreme Court.

It is clear that Mr. Ho possesses impressive credentials, with the experience necessary to excel on the Fifth Circuit. He also earned the praise of prominent Democrats who believe he will make an excellent addition to the Federal court.

Ron Kirk, the Obama administration's Trade Representative and the former mayor of Dallas, supported Mr. Ho's nomination to the Judiciary Committee. He wrote:

Jim possesses the temperament, integrity, and intellect that anyone, Republican or Democrat, should insist on in a federal judge. He is wickedly smart, and is among the most brilliant appellate lawyers in the United States. If there is one thing that my liberal and conservative colleagues agree on, it is that Jim just has it in his DNA to be a great judge.

A Commissioner on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights appointed by President Obama also recommended Mr. Ho in a letter to the Judiciary Committee. She knows him from his volunteer work with the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association. She wrote that he ''has a strong reputation as an intelligent, reasonable, fair and principled lawyer.''

I would like to commend President Trump for another very strong nomination. I would also like to express my gratitude to Chairman GRASSLEY and the members of the Judiciary Committee for their work to process the President's judicial nominees.

I look forward to advancing Mr. Ho's nomination soon.

## THE INTERNET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, one of the great advances of our time has been the development and expansion of the internet and wireless technologies. The internet connects people across the globe in an unprecedented way. It brings together producers and consumers, students and educators, and even Members of the Senate with our constituents.

It is difficult to exaggerate the impact the internet has on our society

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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and our economy each and every day. Even a few decades ago, the technologies many of us take for granted today would have been totally unfathomable.

But the success of the Internet wasn't an accident. Today's internet—and all the incredible innovations that utilize it—aren't the product of unnecessary and burdensome government regulations that hindered growth. Instead, they were the direct result of a bipartisan desire to create an environment of advancement—one that utilized a light regulatory touch. Innovators were free to create and develop what they wanted to, without having to think about complying with overbearing Washington regulation.

As the internet grows, so does the United States. Our Nation has led the world in internet technology, and citizens throughout the country and the world have enjoyed the benefits.

However, the previous administration seemed bent on subjecting the internet to a whole host of new regulations—rules designed in the age of the rotary phone and rooted in the railroad era of the 1800s. Through unprecedented government overreach, the Obama administration argued that this change would fix a problem. But there wasn't a problem that needed fixing.

Therefore at the behest of President Obama in 2015, the partisan majority at the Federal Communications Commission rejected our decades-old approach and reclassified broadband internet access. This overreach subjected it to new burdens and regulations and threatened the marketplace freedom and innovation that brought us the internet we have come to know today.

It shouldn't shock any of my colleagues to hear that an increase in burdensome regulations created uncertainty for businesses of all sizes and negatively impacted investment. In the last 2 years, broadband investment has suffered a serious decline, even though many Americans, including large numbers in rural States like Kentucky, lack access to crucial internet services at home.

Earlier this year, President Trump changed direction from the previous administration. He elevated Ajit Pai to serve as the Chairman of the FCC, and tomorrow, the Commission will vote to repeal the misguided 2015 rule.

Chairman Pai submitted a proposal to restore freedom to the internet and to classify broadband internet access once again as an information service, just like it was until 2015.

When the FCC votes tomorrow, they will be voting to return the internet to a consumer-driven marketplace free of innovation-stifling regulations.

Opponents of Chairman Pai's plan have expressed their concerns about unfair or disruptive business practices that may hurt consumers' access to the internet. However, his proposal will actually restore the Federal Trade Commission's authority to protect consumers and police companies that engage in unfair practices.

Chairman Pai's proposal will also require internet service providers to clearly disclose how they treat their customers' data so that consumers can choose the services that are right for them.

I look forward to their vote in support of the open internet and to Congress's actions in the future to keep the internet open for consumers in a lasting way.

Before I continue onto another matter, I feel that it is necessary to take a moment to discuss the vitriolic and divisive debate over this topic.

As my colleagues know, I am a strong defender of political speech, and I have fought for decades to protect the rights of all Americans to question government policies. However, the discussion on this issue took on a new tone. While the First Amendment protects political speech, it is no excuse for bad conduct.

Instead of debating the effects of a proposal, some of the far left engaged in personal attacks, even going as low as to promulgate attacks citing Chairman Pai's children. This type of behavior does nothing to elevate our Nation's discourse or forward a particular policy. I hope that we can all agree that this type of harassment deserves universal condemnation.

## FUNDING OUR MILITARY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, on another matter, Madam President, over the last eight years, our foreign policy was guided by a Commander in Chief who wished to draw down conventional military power from across the globe. Iran, China, and Russia have sought to fill this vacuum and exploit the perception that America was withdrawing.

This Republican Congress has made a commitment to work with President Trump to rebuild our military and give our men and women in uniform the resources they need to face the challenges of a dangerous world.

We know there is more work to do in restoring our military's combat readiness and meeting the full needs of the force. Earlier this year, we passed a funding measure that was an important departure from the Obama years.

The President has renewed our commitment to Afghanistan, and is trying to train and equip a force that can meet the daunting challenge posed by North Korea.

To begin rebuilding our military, we ignored the Obama-era demand that any increase in defense funding must be equally matched to nondefense increases. We did that earlier this year, and we must do it once again.

As we continue to discuss a plan to fund the government, we must prioritize efforts to provide for our warfighters. The Defense Department suffered a disproportionate reduction under the Budget Control Act—one that has real consequences for readiness. If we are not able to come to a funding agreement, our military—and many other critical functions of the Federal Government—will suffer intolerable budget cuts next year.

I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will work with us in a serious manner to make sure that we are able to responsibly fund the government so that our military has the tools it needs to keep us safe.

## TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, on one final matter, Madam President, later today, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act conference committee will host an open meeting to discuss its progress in resolving the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill.

The conferees have been working diligently to produce a report that both Chambers can vote on soon. Once they complete their work, Congress will be able to fulfill our commitment to the American people and deliver real tax reform.

For too long, the hardworking men and women of Kentucky and our Nation have endured a struggling economy and a broken tax code. Rates are too high. The structure is too complicated to understand, and it is too easy for the wealthy and the well-connected to exploit. Incentives are so nonsensical that some actually encourage corporations to ship American jobs overseas.

It is time for a change. Passing pro-family and pro-growth tax reform is the single most important action we can take right now to grow our economy and help the middle class get ahead.

Families deserve a tax system that works for them; and along with President Trump and his team, this Republican-led Congress is working to deliver. This is our chance to set a new course—to undo the damage that our outdated Tax Code has inflicted on the economy over the last decade.

For the Americans who were left behind by the Obama economy, this is our opportunity to provide relief. We want to make your taxes lower, simpler, and fairer. We want to bring investment and jobs back home and keep them here. The bottom line is this: We want to take more money out of Washington's pocket and put more money into the pockets of the middle class. I am confident the conference committee will finalize a bill that does just that.

It will also repeal ObamaCare's individual mandate tax, delivering relief to low- and middle-income Americans who have struggled under an unpopular and unworkable law.

In addition to this once-in-a-generation tax relief, our legislation will also provide for our Nation's energy future. By further developing Alaska's oil and gas potential, this bill will help create jobs, support energy independence, and promote our national security.

The forthcoming conference report represents our chance to provide a real

benefit to families and small businesses across the Nation. I am grateful to the members of the conference committee for their hard work to resolve the differences between the two bills. I look forward to voting for the final product soon.

## RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

## CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

### ELECTION OF DOUG JONES

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, as we know, last night a Democrat won in the State of Alabama for the first time in a quarter century.

Last night's election of Doug Jones was not only the repudiation of a candidate unfit to serve in this body; it was an affirmation of a candidate who represents the very best of public service.

I read Doug Jones' bio. One story stands out in my mind. As a second-year law student, Doug Jones skipped class to attend the trial of the Klansman ringleader of the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church—an event, as we all remember, that shook the conscience of our country and helped launch a mighty movement for civil rights. Although a young Doug Jones was moved by the disposition of justice in that trial, he was left with the impression that other members of the conspiracy had escaped the reach of the law. So 24 years later, when Doug Jones became the U.S. attorney in Alabama, he pursued charges against two more Klan members involved in the bombing, winning their conviction, and delivered a long-delayed but mighty righteous justice.

Doug Jones deserved to win the race last night. He is a fine man, was an excellent candidate, and is going to make an outstanding Senator for the people of Alabama. I congratulate Senator-Elect Jones and look forward to welcoming him to this Chamber and our caucus.

Two additional points in regard to the election, which has a link to the Chamber here:

First, the election of a Democrat in such a conservative State, which hadn't had a Democratic Senator since 1996—they elected one in 1990, I guess—is a clarion call for bipartisanship. The American people are clamoring for us to work together, to eschew the politics of divisiveness and once again conduct our politics with civility, decency, and an eye toward compromise. That is what Doug Jones represented as a candidate, it is what he campaigned on, and his election should signal to all of my Republican colleagues that the American people, from the deepest red States to the deepest blue States, yearn for our politics to function again in a bipartisan way.

The election of a Democrat in such a conservative State is a clarion call for bipartisanship. The people of Alabama have spoken, and they have sent a message asking both Democrats and Republicans to work together to solve our greatest challenges. That is how Doug Jones campaigned. Roy Moore did not try to pursue any scintilla of bipartisanship, and it might have been one of the reasons he lost, particularly in the suburbs of Birmingham and other cities. I hope we in this body will take this election in earnest and pursue a course of bipartisanship.

### REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

The election of Doug Jones should have another effect on this Chamber as well. It would be unseemly and imprudent to rush a massive piece of partisan legislation through this Chamber before Doug Jones is seated. To rush such a huge piece of legislation when the people of Alabama have just sent us a new Senator and try to jam it through before he gets here would be so wrong. Doug Jones will be the duly elected Senator from the State of Alabama in a few short weeks. The Governor didn't appoint him. The people chose him. It would be wrong for Senate Republicans to jam through this tax bill without giving the newly elected Senator from Alabama the opportunity to cast his vote. The people of Alabama deserve to have their representative in the Senate to debate the biggest issues of the day, and the tax bill certainly falls under that category.

Today, we Senate Democrats are calling on Leader MCCONNELL to hit pause on his tax bill and not hold a final vote on it until Doug Jones is sworn into the Senate. That is exactly what Republicans argued when Scott Brown was elected in 2010. Referring to healthcare, Leader MCCONNELL said it would be ''gamesmanship'' to pursue big-ticket legislation before Scott Brown was seated. He asked us to ''honor the wishes of the people of Massachusetts.'' Leader Reid, in fact, acceded to that wish and waited until Scott Brown was a Senator before there were any further votes on healthcare. ''We're going to wait until the new senator arrives until we do anything more on healthcare,'' he said.

As too often has happened, Senator MCCONNELL does one thing when Republicans are in charge and a different thing when Democrats are in charge. Here is another example. MCCONNELL says: New Senator—in that case, Scott Brown—slow down work on major legislation, and Reid acceded.

We are calling on Senator MCCONNELL to do the same thing today. Let's see if he does. We are calling on Senator MCCONNELL to do just as Senator Reid did—to honor the wishes of the people of a State that has newly elected a Senator and to wait to move forward on the tax bill until Senator Jones arrives.

If Republicans insist on barreling ahead—and I understand the pressure is on them from their hard-right multibillionaire paymasters—they will be pouring gasoline on the fire. Their tax bill—written in back rooms, rushed through this Chamber with such recklessness—which gives enormous breaks to the wealthy and corporations while it raises taxes on millions, many of them in the middle class, is being roundly rejected by the American people. Poll after poll shows by ratios equal to, a little less than, or a little more than two to one that the American people reject this bill. They know what is in it. They don't know all of the details, but they know it favors the wealthy and powerful over them, over the middle class. They know that, even if they are getting a small tax break, the vast majority of the tax breaks go to the wealthiest and the most powerful, and they don't like it. Above all, they know this tax bill will clobber the suburbs, drastically cutting back on the State and local deductions and other deductions they cut back on, which will be a gut punch to millions of middle-class and upper middle-class Americans who live in the suburbs. They are the very same people who are turning away from President Trump, who helped to propel Doug Jones to victory last night, and who helped to propel Mr. Northam to be Governor of Virginia when his opponent Gillespie was calling for a $10,000 tax break for the middle class.

The longer this bill sits behind closed doors, the worse it is getting. Rather than improving it for the middle class, they are cutting the rate further on the wealthiest of Americans, according to all reports—to reduce the top rate another 2.5 percent, only going to people who make over $300,000 a year, while raising taxes on the middle class. What is going on in the heads of our Republican colleagues? Why would they do something that seems so wrong for America and so against what the American people want? We know why. The Koch brothers and the Club for Growth, funded largely by billionaires and millionaires, and all these other groups are fanatic: Just cut taxes on the rich.

I don't even hear them arguing for helping the middle class, except in TV ads that are deceptive, in my judgment. But they are doing it for that

reason. Our Republican colleagues, by trying to appease these very wealthy people—a small number of greedy people—are writing their political doom, in my opinion.

The longer this bill sits behind closed doors, the worse it is getting. It is not improving things for the middle class. It is making them worse. Instead of learning from their mistakes, instead of heeding one of the lessons of the election last night, Republicans are doubling down on helping the wealthy and powerful and doing nothing for, if not harming, the middle class.

In 2010 on the floor of the Senate, Leader MCCONNELL said:

> We need to move in a new direction—a dramatically new direction. That is the message of Virginia. That is the message of New Jersey. That is the message of Massachusetts.

You could replace Massachusetts with Alabama and say the exact same thing today. In sum, on process, on policy, and on politics, pausing this tax bill and going back to the drawing board is the right thing for Republicans to do. I hope, for the sake of this country, they will do just that.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NET NEUTRALITY

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, today we are closing in on a critical decision that will have a lasting impact on the innovation-driven economy of the United States. The Chairman of the FCC has decided to repeal a critical consumer protection known as net neutrality. This is a wrongheaded move. It is misguided. It is being driven by big cable interests that want to continue to gouge consumers and charge them more, making sure that consumers either pay or have their internet lines slowed down.

This decision turns the success of what has been an essential 21st-century innovation over to those in big corporations, instead of making sure that Main Street innovators continue to do what they do best. I don't think the American people want cable companies to be the gatekeeper on the internet. They want to have the FCC continue to play a role in making sure that an open internet is there for all, so that small businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators can continue to build on the success of communicating with their consumers and their business partners without having artificially slowed-down lines.

Who would this impact if the FCC moves forward?

You could say that seniors would be impacted with regard to receiving their telehealth medicine and that students would be impacted in the slowing down of their education. Families who access educational tools for their children could also see charges, and the open highway that has been so important in making sure that new internet businesses are started could be impacted.

The No. 1 reason we have to fight this decision—making sure that we do everything we can to stop the FCC from implementing this rule and giving consumers the protection of net neutrality—is that it will harm our internet economy. Last summer we had a townhall meeting about this, where I heard from many of my constituents. I then sent in many business cases to Chairman Pai so that he would understand why this impacts us so much.

Let's make sure that we understand what is happening. The FCC had rules that had prevented companies from throttling, or blocking, and it had paved the way for many great successes. In the United States, we have Fortune 500 companies and a tech industry that is responsible for 7 percent of our Nation's GDP and 6.9 million jobs in the United States of America.

Why would you change the rules now? Why would you leave after having made sure critical protections were in place and, instead, replace them with the ability for certain companies—cable, specifically—to wreak havoc on this economy?

Thirteen percent of Washington State's economy depends on a healthy internet sector. The internet economy for our State supports 250,000 jobs, and at a time when the Nation has not had enough wage growth, these tech jobs have been a bedrock for the middle class.

Chairman Pai is clearly not focused on the 250,000 jobs and the 13 percent of our State's economy. Just this past weekend, I and my colleague, Congresswoman DELBENE, met with many of these small businesses. Their message was loud and clear: Please stop Chairman Pai from ruining the internet by taking away key protections that make sure our businesses run successfully.

Chairman Pai is abdicating his role. He is abandoning the consumers whom he has sworn an oath to serve, and he is turning his back on innovators. He has really changed the direction for us and our innovation economy. I know that he thinks this is a light touch, but I guarantee you that it is a ''no touch'' regulation. What we need is to make sure that these companies do not artificially charge consumers, small businesses, and Main Street more for what they already are doing now and doing successfully. Obviously, an open internet rule and the rules that we are living under now have fueled an innovation economy. Every business plan of every startup relies on the company's ability to be able to contact its consumers.

With this much of our economy at stake, let's not continue to make mistakes. Let's continue to fight here in the Senate and make sure that we stop Chairman Pai and the FCC from having the resources to implement this rule. It is so important now that we continue to fight for small businesses, for Main Street entrepreneurs, and for the innovation economy.

We deserve to have an open internet. As the small businesses and innovators just said to me this past weekend in Seattle, this is really like siding with the big companies and saying that they are going to make all of the decisions, that they are the ones that are going to be in control. They are not going to be for competition, and they are not going to be for this level of innovation. They are going to slow down what is one of the best parts of our economy.

I hope that our colleagues will join the fight and stop the FCC, in any manner possible, from implementing what is, literally, a very, very anticompetitive strategy and one that is very, very focused on big corporations, instead of the innovation economy of the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I thank all of my colleagues, led by Senator CANTWELL, for joining me on the floor this afternoon.

We are speaking on behalf of millions of our constituents and of the tens of millions of Americans who support a free and open internet. I am proud to come to the floor to discuss an issue of national importance to both our economy and our democracy—net neutrality.

Now, a lot of people have recently stopped and asked me: What exactly is net neutrality?

The technical answer is that network neutrality, or net neutrality, is the principle that internet service providers—you know their names: Verizon, AT&T, Charter, Comcast—cannot discriminate against content providers, against websites. They are the people to whom you pay by check each month and who make sure that you have broadband service. You know who they are. The simpler explanation is this: No one owns the internet. Everyone can use the internet. Anyone can improve the internet.

Yet that will not be the case if the Trump administration and Ajit Pai, the Chairman, and Republicans have their way. They want to get rid of the Federal Communications Commission's net neutrality rules so that the ISPs, the internet service providers, can indiscriminately charge more for internet fast lanes, slow down websites, block websites, make it harder—and, maybe, even impossible—for inventors, entrepreneurs, and small businesses—the lifeblood of the American economy—to connect to the internet.

That is why we are here this afternoon on the floor, and it is why supporters of a free and open internet are vigorously opposed to this politically craven attempt to weaken the principle of net neutrality that has allowed the internet to flourish.

Tomorrow the Federal Communications Commission is voting on a proposal that will cut at the very heart of a free and open internet. They are voting to roll back net neutrality protections and send a love letter to the big broadband companies that stand to make huge profits without these rules.

So what are Chairman Pai and his broadband buddies really trying to do?

The first thing they will do is to gut the rule against blocking. What does that mean? It means that an internet service provider could block any website it wants. That includes a website of a competing service or a website with a contrary political view—whatever they want.

Second, Chairman Pai would gut the rule against throttling. What does that mean? It means that the internet service provider could slow down any website it wants.

Third, Chairman Pai would gut the rule that bans paid prioritization. What does that mean? It means that the internet service provider could charge websites for an internet fast lane, meaning that those websites could load more quickly, while the websites that could not afford the internet's ''E-ZPass'' would be stuck on a gravel path and take more time to load, frustrating consumers with long buffering times.

Fourth, Chairman Pai would gut the forward-looking general conduct rule. What does that mean? The general conduct rule protects consumers from harms such as data caps and other discriminatory behavior that ISPs will think of in the coming months or years ahead.

Fifth, Chairman Pai would create an unregulated interconnection market. What does that mean? It means that the Federal Communications Commission would lose authority to oversee places at which ISPs connect to the internet and extract fees.

Finally, Chairman Pai wants to prevent States and localities from adopting their own net neutrality protections.

What will be the replacement for these enforceable net neutrality rules today? What will replace them? Absolutely nothing. Chairman Pai will leave it to the internet service providers to, simply, regulate themselves in this unpoliced internet ''Wild West.''

Chairman Pai claims that the Federal Trade Commission—not the Federal Communications Commission, which is the Commission of expertise over telecommunications—somehow provides a sufficient backstop to bad behavior by the ISPs, but that is simply not true.

Under the Federal Trade Commission, the big broadband barons would establish their own net neutrality policies. That is like letting the bullies develop their own playground rules. If the ISP wants to block websites, slow down competitors' websites, and charge innovators and entrepreneurs to reach their customers, they will be free to do so. That is because the Federal Trade Commission can only step in if a broadband provider violates its own net neutrality policies—that is, the policy created by the broadband company itself. Yet, if an internet service provider has a written policy that charges websites for internet fast lanes, there is nothing the Federal Trade Commission can do about it.

That is ridiculous, and it is wrong. Allowing the broadband industry to set its own net neutrality protections is like letting the fox guard the henhouse.

OK, so the Federal Trade Commission oversight will not work. Chairman Pai claims that he has another solution. It is called transparency. He argues that, if ISPs are transparent about their net neutrality practices, consumers and businesses can simply choose to use a broadband provider with the net neutrality practices that best suit them. But what good is transparency when most Americans have little or no choice for high-speed broadband access?

Consider this that 62 percent of Americans have only one choice for high-speed, fixed broadband. That is right. Nearly two-thirds of the country have only one choice from whom they can purchase broadband. That means, if a household's only choice for high-speed broadband is not transparent about its plans to set up internet fast and slow lanes, the consumer has two choices—one, to accept the internet service provider's terms or, two, to live without the internet. That is a false choice. People do not want to live without the internet in the 21st century.

Chairman Pai claims that internet service providers actually support net neutrality but just not the open internet order under which we are living today. That is like saying that you support democracy but not the Constitution. It is like saying that you like math but you hate numbers. It makes no sense.

The broadband barons have been fighting for years, both at the Federal Communications Commission and in the courts, to block net neutrality rules. It is crystal clear, and it has been for years. The broadband companies are deeply opposed to net neutrality because they want to drive up their profits by setting up internet fast and slow lanes and charge consumers more for less. It is a simple formula.

Chairman Pai also claims that broadband investment has been discouraged by the open internet order. That is false. Investment in our broadband infrastructure is stronger than ever, and with the deployment of 5G technologies on the horizon, we can expect this strong investment to continue. Broadband investment in the aggregate has increased in the 2 years since the FCC passed the open internet order. Beyond just measuring dollars spent, broadband speeds also increased after the 2015 order, meaning the ISPs have been improving the services they offer to their consumers. Consider this: In 2016 almost half of the venture capital funds invested in this country went toward internet-specific and software companies. That is $25 billion worth of investments.

We have hit the sweet spot. Investment in broadband and wireless technologies is high, job creation is high, and venture capital investment in online startups is high. Chairman Pai threatens to disrupt this appropriate balance and squash innovation online. It is clear that Americans do not want what the FCC is proposing. It seems as though the only supporter of this plan is the broadband industry.

If Chairman Pai and his Republican colleagues turn a deaf ear to millions of Americans standing up to net neutrality and approve their plan tomorrow, we will continue this fight elsewhere. When the Obama-era rules were challenged by the internet service providers in 2015, I led a congressional amicus brief with Congresswoman ESHOO in support of the rules. Congresswoman ESHOO and I plan to do it again this time and lead an amicus brief in defense of net neutrality. I also intend to file a Congressional Review Act, or CRA, resolution of disapproval with a number of my colleagues so that the U.S. Senate can vote to undo Chairman Pai's proposal and restore the 2015 open internet order.

The Trump administration is waging an all-out assault on our core protections: DACA, the Affordable Care Act, the Paris climate accord, and the Clean Power Plan. Now Trump's Federal Communications Commission has put net neutrality in its sights.

For all of those who rely upon the free and open internet, whether it is for commerce, education, healthcare or entertainment, I urge you to join me in this fight to create a firestorm of opposition to this assault on net neutrality. This is a fundamental attack on the openness of the internet that must be beaten, and we must now form an army of ordinary Americans as the voices that will fight the special interests and lobbyists in this city who want to shut down net neutrality forever.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, there are a handful of innovations over the years that have redefined the United States and the entire world. The cotton gin, railroads, electricity, and the automobile are just a few examples. However, without question, broadband internet is one of the defining innovations of our time. Broadband internet connects both rural and urban communities to vital services such as telemedicine, educational resources, and international commerce. In fact, broadband internet is absolutely essential for communications in the modern era. It lets us keep in touch with our loved ones no matter where they live,

and it has boosted productivity across every single industry. Perhaps most importantly, broadband internet revolutionized our economy and has led to millions of new jobs.

The ability to instantly reach consumers wherever they live has allowed American small businesses and startups to compete with large global corporations in a way that would have been simply unimaginable just a couple of decades ago.

Michigan is home to over 850,000 small businesses and a growing number of startups. The new ideas and creative solutions they generate put America on the cutting edge of a global and interconnected economy. Michigan small businesses are able to compete and innovate because of the free and open structure of the internet, but, unfortunately, these opportunities are at risk.

Tomorrow the FCC will vote to eliminate current net neutrality protections that stop large corporations from stifling small businesses and harming the American people. I think the facts are very straightforward, and the FCC is wrong. They should stop what they are doing and keep the current protections in place.

The current rules that I have consistently supported prevent internet service providers from blocking, slowing, or prioritizing web traffic for their own financial gain at the expense of small businesses and every day internet users. The FCC's actions to roll back these protections could usher in a new era of a two-tiered internet—one for the large corporations that can pay for the fast lane and a slow lane for the rest of us. This will allow internet service providers and multinational corporations to compete unfairly against startups, slowing down their traffic and playing gatekeeper to potential customers.

Let me be clear. Repealing net neutrality is anti-innovation, repealing net neutrality is anti-competition, and repealing net neutrality is anti-consumer.

The FCC should not consider this proposal tomorrow to degrade internet service, especially during a time when over 20 million households in rural America, including far too many in my home State of Michigan, still lack access to high-speed broadband internet.

The FCC has a lot of work to do to close the digital divide, and repealing net neutrality is taking our country backward, not forward. If the internet doesn't work for growing small businesses and startups, our economy will be hurt for generations to come. High-speed broadband and net neutrality in the 21st century is every bit as vital as electricity was in the 20th century. All Americans deserve access, regardless of their income or their ZIP Code.

We accomplished the goal of bringing electricity to every household in this country in the last century, even in the most rural areas, by making it a national priority. We need to make access to broadband internet with strong net neutrality protections a national priority today.

By preserving net neutrality, we put students, artists, advocates, entrepreneurs, and other visionaries, who could be inventing the future and creating the next big thing, ahead of a handful of multinational corporations.

The FCC should call off this dangerous vote and, instead, work to ensure that the internet remains a hub of entrepreneurship, creativity, and competition.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Madam President, over 2 months ago I stood here in this Chamber, urging my colleagues to pass legislation that will prevent kids enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program from losing their healthcare. The Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, provides healthcare coverage to over 100,000 children in my home State of Michigan and more than 9 million children nationwide.

I recall welcoming the news that Senate Finance Committee Chairman HATCH and Ranking Member WYDEN had reached a bipartisan agreement to extend the healthcare benefits for these children. They worked together and went through regular order. The Finance Committee held a hearing and a markup on the bill in October.

We all know that regular order has become a very rare event in the Senate today, and I appreciate the bipartisan effort to have a Senate vote on a bill that is absolutely critical to our Nation's children. I certainly expected that this bipartisan bill would come to the floor and pass with broad bipartisan support, thus bringing relief to families across the Nation who are worried about whether their children will continue to have healthcare in 2018. Unfortunately, in the months since those good-faith efforts, we still have not seen a vote on this important legislation. This is inexcusable. We must take action now.

States are already beginning to notify families that their children's healthcare plans may be canceled if Congress does not act. States such as Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, and others have announced that they may run out of funds within weeks. In my home State of Michigan, I have heard from parents who are worried about whether their children will still be able to see their pediatrician next year. I have also heard from pediatricians who take care of these children how children will be hurt if their healthcare is taken away.

It would be unconscionable to rip healthcare services away from children during the most formative years of their lives. It would be unconscionable to put new roadblocks up for families whose children need physicals and vaccines before they can go to school. It would be unconscionable to increase healthcare costs for working families who are just trying to keep their children healthy and give them the opportunity to prosper.

This is not a partisan issue. In 1997, President Bill Clinton worked with a Republican majority both in the Senate and in the House of Representatives to successfully pass the Children's Health Insurance Program into law. That legislation passed with 85 votes in the Senate because providing needed health services to children should never be a partisan issue.

The CHIP program has been reauthorized on a bipartisan basis since its inception because it is effective. CHIP is working for our Nation's children, and we should be too.

I urge my colleagues across the aisle to call for a vote on this legislation to extend CHIP and pass it without delay. Let's do what is right for our country's children and families and pass this bipartisan legislation now.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, this week, the Federal Communications Commission—FCC—is preparing to give a giant, early Christmas present to a few, deep-pocketed telecom companies, as it prepares to repeal critical net neutrality protections. Net neutrality is the simple principle that the internet should be kept free and open by preventing the corporations who control the connections to selectively throttle or block certain content, especially that of competitors.

Repealing net neutrality rules will benefit just a few powerful corporations—and it will do so at the expense of small businesses, consumers, and hard-working Americans, whose persistent and passionate voices on this issue have been completely ignored by the FCC's Republican majority.

Despite calling for public hearings when the current net neutrality protections were developed, Chairman Pai has failed to heed his own advice now that he is in charge of the FCC.

It seems the only people he listens to are those with deep enough pockets to afford high-powered lobbyists. If you are a concerned citizen or small business owner, your voice doesn't matter to this FCC. As someone who held public hearings on this issue in 2014, I can tell you that there is widespread and overwhelming support for net neutrality just about everywhere except at the FCC itself.

If the Chairman took the time to listen, as I did, he would hear from small business owners like Cabot Orton at the Vermont Country Store, who told me, ''We're not asking for special treatment, incentives, or subsidies. All the small business community asks is simply to preserve and protect Internet commerce as it exists today, which has served all businesses remarkably well.''

Just today, we received a letter from businesses in Northern New England, including Vermont's own Ben & Jerry's, Cabot Creamery Cooperative, and King Arthur Flour, discussing the

''crippling effect'' a repeal of net neutrality rules would have on rural businesses.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of this letter be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

Chairman Pai would hear from libraries, which for some rural communities are the only way to access the internet.

As Vermont's State librarian, Martha Reid, told me: ''All Americans—including the most disenfranchised citizens, those who would have no way to access the Internet without the library—need to be able to use Internet resources on an equal footing.''

Chairman Pai would also hear from independent content creators whose voices are too often not heard on traditional media. As actress, writer, and producer Ruth Livier told me: ''In the unprecedented world of an open, nondiscriminatory Internet, no longer did low-budgets and no connections mean there was no way in. Never again could we be disregarded by anyone who essentially asks, 'Who are you to have your story be told?' ''

These are the voices being ignored. They are the people, the Americans, who stand to lose the most in the Chairman Pai's misguided plan.

This is not about partisanship. Republicans and Democrats alike, in my State and every other State, benefit from the power of an open Internet, and equally stand to be harmed if the rules of the road ensuring its openness go away.

I know there are some people with a lot of money who want to do away with net neutrality. They are even filing fake comments with the FCC saying they want to repeal these protections. One of those comments came to my attention. It had my name and my home address on it. Most people, when they saw it, just laughed, because they knew it was fake.

None of us should support a process that willfully dismisses the voices of our constituents. I hope that all Senators will join me in calling on the FCC to abandon this reckless vote to repeal net neutrality.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DECEMBER 13, 2017.

The Hon. AJIT PAI,
*Chairman, Federal Communications Commission, Washington, DC.*

DEAR FCC CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI: We are a group of businesses from Northern New England with strong ties to the rural and agricultural business community. We are writing today out of deep concern about the FCC's proposal to roll back the current net neutrality rules based on Title II of the Communications Act. We urge you to maintain the existing rules instead.

As members of the business community in this region, we regularly witness how small rural businesses, including the farms and cooperatives that many of us source from, already struggle with limited access to broadband and limited options for Internet service providers. The repeal of net neutrality would compound the challenges faced by these businesses, adding cost and creating a competitive disadvantage to running a successful business in rural America.

Uninhibited access to the internet is already a fundamental necessity for operating a successful business in rural areas. Looking to the future, this is only going to become more important. In our work with farmers in this region, we see how this particular group of businesses is increasingly reliant on the internet for access to technical information and support, and for access to information about markets.

The changes proposed by the FCC would remove the only existing legal foundation strong enough to ensure net neutrality protections are enforceable: Title II of the Communications Act, as implemented in the agency's 2015 Open Internet Order.

Under this change, internet providers would gain new powers to steer businesses and customers one way or another. For example, Internet access providers could charge new fees for prioritized access to customers. While big companies and farms might be able to afford a pay-to-play prioritized 'fast lane' to users, small and medium sized businesses cannot; at the very least, such new fees would put them at a distinct disadvantage with larger competitors. Internet access providers could also charge rural businesses new fees for access to websites and services. They could favor certain businesses by slowing down traffic or exempting competitors' traffic from users' data caps. They could also block websites and apps outright. This would create immense uncertainty for companies in every sector of the economy who rely on open, unencumbered connectivity as a key enabler for their business and productivity. It could also greatly limit or bias farmers' access to products, services, and information they need to run their business.

Ultimately, repealing net neutrality will have a crippling effect on rural economies, further restricting access to the internet for rural businesses at a point in time where we need to expand and speed this access instead. We urge you to maintain strong net neutrality rules and focus on advancing policies that foster fair competition.

Sincerely,

STONYFIELD,
*Londonderry, New Hampshire.*
KING ARTHUR FLOUR,
*Norwich, Vermont.*
FOODSTATE,
*Londonderry, New Hampshire.*
BOLOCO, HANOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE.
GRANDY OATS,
*Hiram, Maine.*
CABOT CREAMERY COOPERATIVE,
*Waitsfield, Vermont.*
BEN AND JERRY'S,
*South Burlington, Vermont.*
MAINE GRAINS,
*Skowhegan, Maine.*

cc: Sen. Susan Collins, Sen. Angus King, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, Sen. Margaret Hassan, Sen. Patrick Leahy, Sen. Bernie Sanders, Rep. Chellie Pingree, Rep. Bruce Poliquin, Rep. Ann McLane Kuster, Rep. Carol Shea-Porter, Rep. Peter Welch.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise to join with the Senator from Vermont in opposition to the FCC's planned vote to end net neutrality protections.

Tomorrow, as he noted, the FCC will hold a vote on Chairman Pai's plan to eliminate net neutrality. These rules have kept the internet free and open, and in a day where a lot of things aren't working, this was something that was actually working. People were able to access the internet, people in my State who maybe didn't have a lot of resources. Kids were able to access the internet to do their homework. It was working. If the FCC votes to abandon net neutrality, it will put internet service providers, not consumers, in charge of determining the future of the internet.

Net neutrality holds internet service providers—big mega-internet service providers—accountable for providing the internet access consumers expect while protecting innovation and competition. It is the bedrock of a fast, free, and open internet.

Net neutrality has allowed the internet to become one of the great American success stories, transforming not only how we communicate with our friends and our family but the way we do business, how consumers buy goods, and how we educate our kids. These protections have worked. We have rural kids who couldn't access classes before who are able to get these classes on the internet. We have small businesses that are able to advertise their services in a way that no one would have known that they existed. One of my favorite ones is a company called Weave Got Maille, and they are doing chain jewelry. It is just a group of about 10, 15 employees up there who started with nothing but one chain. Then they were able to come up with a cool nickname, and then they were able to advertise on the internet directly to consumers. Now they are one of the biggest employers in the town right on the Canadian border.

These internet protections that have allowed small businesses to blossom have allowed consumers to access the internet like everyone else. They have worked, but with the FCC's vote tomorrow, the internet may soon be changing.

Earlier this year, when Chairman Pai announced his proposal to eliminate net neutrality protections, Americans took the opportunity to make their voices heard during the public comment hearing, and the proposal received a record 23 million comments. While many of these comments are written by consumers worried about the future of the internet, there is reason to be concerned about that process. Approximately 1 million fraudulent comments were filed with the FCC, and an additional half a million comments were filed with Russian email addresses. Sound familiar? I think so.

I think everyone in this Chamber knows Russia has been trying to influence our democracy in every way they can—from hacking to putting out propaganda, to now trying to insert itself into a comment process for our free and open internet, something that has

been the hallmark of American society, something they don't have in Russia. Just think, an additional half a million comments were filed from Russian email addresses. This is troubling because, in America, the public comment process matters. It is one of the few opportunities Americans have to weigh in directly with the FCC. That is why I joined several of my colleagues in calling on Chairman Pai to delay the vote until the FCC fully investigated these fake and foreign comments. Despite our calls, the FCC is still moving ahead with its vote. Despite 23 million comments, they are still moving ahead with their vote.

Under Chairman Pai's plan, the FCC gives internet service providers the ability to significantly change consumers' experience online. Internet service providers may soon be able to block, slow, and prioritize web traffic for their own financial gain, not for the average citizens' gain but for their gain. This means, internet service providers could begin sorting online traffic into fast or slow lanes and charging consumers extra for high-speed broadband. They would also be able to slow consumers' connections once they have hit a certain data limit or if they are viewing content from a competitor, and internet service providers may even block content they don't want their subscribers to access. So much for an open internet.

The only protections maintained under the proposed order are requirements for service providers to disclose their internet traffic policies. However, for consumers with only one choice for internet service, like many in my State and like many in rural areas, there is no real opportunity to comparison shop or find a new provider if they are unhappy with their service. This means that even though consumers may be aware that their internet service provider is blocking or slowing their connection, they actually don't have a choice so what does that information matter to them anyway? This proposal will harm consumers, particularly in rural areas. It will limit competition, and it will hurt small business, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

What I have seen around this place is that everyone is talking about rural broadband. They want to expand broadband. I want to expand broadband. Well, you can expand broadband all you want, but it is not going to matter if people aren't able to afford to access it.

A truly open internet encourages economic growth and provides opportunities for businesses to reach new markets, drive innovation, and create jobs. Small businesses remain engines of job creation, and net neutrality levels the playing field, allowing small companies to compete with more established brands. That is what America is about—allowing more innovation and small companies to come up and compete.

Unfortunately, for small businesses and startups across the country, the net neutrality repeal will mean new barriers when competing online. Without unrestricted access to the internet, entrepreneurs may be forced to pay for equal footing to compete online rather than focus on expanding their business. Small businesses unable to pay for access to faster internet service may soon find themselves struggling to compete from the slow lane, not the fast lane. This proposal will hurt the very people creating jobs and keeping our economy competitive.

As a strong supporter of a free and open internet, it is clear that repealing net neutrality is a step in the wrong direction. We are facing an increasingly global and interconnected economy, and it is critical that the internet remain a hub of entrepreneurship, creativity, and fair competition.

The fight to protect net neutrality is far from over, and we need to keep the pressure on. We have seen merger after merger after merger. We have seen consolidated businesses, bigger and bigger and bigger. So now what is the next step here? To limit net neutrality to make it harder for the small guys, for the ones who are trying to get into the market to compete. It is not just an isolated philosophy; it is actually part of a larger philosophy, which means that smaller companies, that individuals are going to have a hard time getting into the market and getting free access like the big guys.

That is why we ask Chairman Pai to reconsider this vote on Thursday and to come up with a new policy that doesn't hurt the people of America.

It is no surprise today that the poll I saw said the vast majority of Americans don't favor getting rid of net neutrality, and in fact it showed the vast majority of Republicans don't favor getting rid of net neutrality. So we ask Chairman Pai, who was appointed chairman by a Republican President, to reconsider this decision.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Massachusetts.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, we are in the middle of a historically important debate here in Washington. Republicans have hatched a partisan proposal behind closed doors that would shovel a trillion dollars in tax giveaways to giant corporations and the wealthy while undermining the healthcare and raising taxes for millions of middle-class families. If it passes, it could affect the lives of every single American for an entire generation.

Now, last night, the people of Alabama elected a new Senator to represent them here in Washington. So now Republicans who control the Senate face a choice. Will they allow Senator-elect Doug Jones to take his seat among his colleagues before a final vote on their tax plan?

We actually know something about that kind of choice in my home State of Massachusetts. On January 19, 2010, Massachusetts elected a new Senator to represent them here in Washington. The result was just as shocking to Democrats as last night's result was to Republicans. It also came when we were in the middle of another historically important policy debate here in Washington—healthcare. A lot of people thought Democrats should ram through the final version of their bill in Congress before Brown could be seated.

Now, I could stand here and read you quote after quote after quote from Republicans, who now control the Senate, talking about how unfair that would be, how corrupt that would be, and how anti-democratic that would be. I could go on and on about how today's Senate majority leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, said this would be gamesmanship, but I am going to talk about what Democrats actually did.

Democrats rejected the idea of ramming through the bill before Brown could take his seat in the Senate. Almost immediately, Jim Webb, a Democratic Senator from Virginia, called for a suspension of any healthcare vote until after Brown arrived. The day after the Massachusetts election, the Senate majority leader, Harry Reid, said publicly: ''We're going to wait until the new Senator arrives until we do anything more on health care.''

Massachusetts Democratic Senator John Kerry held a joint press conference with Republican Scott Brown that same week, where he said:

> Seating Scott Brown as expeditiously as possible is important. We want to respect the election results. And nobody wants to delay this process.

President Obama, whose entire healthcare agenda was on the line, said this:

> Here's one thing I know and I just want to make sure that this is off the table: The Senate certainly shouldn't try to jam anything through until Scott Brown is seated. People in Massachusetts spoke. He's got to be part of that process.

Now, this wasn't an easy decision. Waiting for Brown slowed down the adoption of healthcare for 2 additional months. More importantly, it meant Democrats lost their filibuster-proof majority and, as a consequence, the final bill couldn't achieve nearly as much as Democrats had hoped for, but we did it anyway.

We did it because democracy matters, even when it means it might slow down a President's agenda. Democracy matters, even when a Senate seat held for decades by a liberal lion is taken over by a conservative. Democracy matters, especially when it is inconvenient.

If we are honest, we know that there hasn't been a lot of democracy around this tax bill. This is a bill that was written and rewritten in the dead of night, behind closed doors. It is filled with errors and unintended consequences. It is animated by a rotten

wealth transfer from millions of hard-working Americans to a handful of corporations and billionaires.

But up until now, we have at least respected the principle that each State gets to pick its Senators, and those Senators get to vote for or against the final product. This afternoon, we are being told that Republicans have a final tax deal. Nobody has seen it, but we could be voting on it in the next couple of days. There is no reason to ram through that kind of massive restructuring of our economic system before Alabama gets its new Senator unless Republicans are concerned that their deal won't withstand a couple of more weeks of public scrutiny.

The election of Doug Jones will not change which party controls the Senate. The election of Doug Jones will not give him or Democrats the power to block the tax bill or any other piece of legislation, but it will respect the people of Alabama and their choice. It should happen before any more tax votes take place in the Senate.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. President, almost 60 years ago, America entered the space age. We pushed the bounds of human knowledge to do, see, and create things that fundamentally changed the way we live our lives. The government was right smack at the center of all of it, dedicating resources and manpower to explorations of science, medicine, engineering, and technology. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, was a product of that commitment, and it was there at DARPA that a bunch of government and government-funded researchers created the internet.

In the intervening decades, what started in that government Agency provided the building blocks for what we experience as the internet today. Creative minds in government, at colleges and universities, in businesses, and at homes and garages all across the country toyed and tinkered and pushed us into the digital age.

Today, internet use is nearly universal. Although internet access remains limited in many rural and low-income areas, students of all ages go online to access educational tools and conduct research for many school assignments. Entrepreneurs and small businesses sell goods and transact business online. Families come together to watch their favorite movies or shows. The internet and broadband services have become an important part of our lives.

Government is just as important now as it was back when the internet was created. By enforcing and implementing America's communications laws and rules, the Federal Communications Commission, the FCC, plays a critical role in making sure that the internet remains fair and open.

In 2015, the FCC enshrined that commitment in an open internet order, establishing net neutrality rules—strong, public interest rules that prevented big companies from deciding how or when we use the internet, rules that have the overwhelming support of the vast majority of Americans, Republican or Democrat.

But big internet companies don't want the FCC to work in the public interest; they want the internet to work for them. Long before the FCC passed net neutrality rules, those giants were working to establish control over the open internet. After net neutrality rules were passed, they stepped up their attack, deploying armies of lobbyists and lawyers and investing massive amounts of money to bury net neutrality rules.

Now they have the champagne chilled and ready to pop open. They have a President and a GOP-controlled Congress that is more interested in stuffing the pockets of the rich and powerful than taking care of the workers, small businesses and entrepreneurs, students, children, the sick, the elderly, and just about everybody else. President Trump's choice to lead the FCC, Ajit Pai, is dedicated to transforming the FCC from an agency that works in the public interest into a big business giveaway group.

Pai has been a vocal opponent of net neutrality rules for a very long time. After President Trump won the election, Pai gleefully declared that net neutrality's days were numbered. Pai claims that nondiscrimination rules harm giant internet companies by making it more difficult for them to create new and better products. He thinks that if these giants can discriminate against small businesses or individuals, then these giants can pick who gets the fast lane into your television set and who is stuck off on the dirt roads. If these giants can dictate which startups get a foothold and which ones are left on the ground, then the giants will be better off. Of course, he is right—the giants will be better off, but everyone else will be a lot worse off.

Chairman Pai is so committed to these internet giants that he is willing to rewrite the Federal rules in order to help them out. He is even willing to rewrite the rules so State and local governments won't be allowed to pass any consumer protection laws to protect their own citizens. Chairman Pai's notion of a fair and open internet is one that works for the highest bidder and it just leaves everyone else behind.

Tomorrow, the FCC will vote on whether to eliminate the protections that ensure that the internet remains fair and open to all Americans—protections that the vast majority of Americans support. Pai has barrelled full speed ahead despite disturbing reports that potentially hundreds of thousands of comments submitted during the public comment period were fake, and he has ignored the FCC's responsibility to turn over documents of consumer complaints about discriminatory behavior by internet providers.

If the FCC eliminates net neutrality protections, giant internet companies will pop open those champagne bottles. They will have the power to block access, to filter content, to charge more—three powerful ways that they will pick the next round of America's winners and losers. That is not the way it should work in America. The internet doesn't belong to big internet companies; it belongs to all of us, and all of us should be part of this fight.

Net neutrality matters. For the entrepreneur working around the clock on a shoestring budget to build an invention that can change the world, net neutrality matters. For the small family business that depends on online customers to keep its lights on and its doors open, net neutrality matters. For the blog writer or local journalist who works each day to bring us important news about our communities, our government, and our world, net neutrality matters. For every American who uses the internet for any reason, net neutrality matters.

Ingenuity is in America's DNA. It is that spirit of curiosity and adventure that has put us at the forefront of the search for what is next. Government works best when it makes sure everyone has equal access to the resources that make that possible.

In Massachusetts, Free Press, the Massachusetts Chapter of the ACLU, Fight for the Future, and countless other groups have led the fight to defend net neutrality and help citizens make their voices heard.

I urge every American to speak out about why net neutrality matters. I urge the FCC to abandon its plan to kill net neutrality rules, and I ask the FCC to defend an internet that is fair and open to all.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I introduced the Senate's first strong net neutrality bill back in 2006. I rise today to give my strongest possible condemnation of what the Federal Communications Commission's head, Mr. Pai, is seeking to do, which is to roll back protections that ensure a truly free and open internet for our people.

This is a handout. It is a holiday gift to a collection of giant internet companies to increase their profits at the expense of the consumer.

Before I actually begin my remarks, I see Senator FRANKEN is on the floor, as well. I would like the public to know how important his leadership has been on these issues. He and I have partnered on these issues ever since he came to the Senate. He was on the key committee, the Judiciary Committee. He has been a go-to figure in a key spot on this issue.

I want to continue this discussion after Senator WARREN's terrific presentation. I know my colleague is going to speak on this, as well.

I want the public to know that Senator FRANKEN has made a big difference for the consumer on these issues. Those

of us who have been toiling in these precincts are very appreciative of what he has done.

I want people to understand what net neutrality is, because Senator FRANKEN and I have talked about this over the years. I think there is a little confusion over what it is. Net neutrality means that after you pay your internet access fee, you get to go where you want, when you want, and how you want. It is the essence of ensuring that everybody gets a fair shake, that all bits are created equal. It is the foundation of what has kept the internet free and open.

Before I get into my prepared remarks, I want people to understand what happens if you don't have net neutrality. If you don't have net neutrality, in effect, big companies can manipulate who is going to win and who is going to lose in the marketplace. They will continue to manipulate who wins and who loses until and after we get fewer services and the consumer gets higher prices. So this is not some kind of abstract discussion.

Let me flesh out some of these remarks for a few minutes because I know my colleagues have been waiting, as well.

Since the origins of the internet, the defining feature has been that all information—all bits, as we know it—gets the same fair shake. If you are a big company or a mom-and-pop ice cream shop with a website, your content gets to everybody's home at the same speed. That is what net neutrality is all about. Net neutrality keeps internet service providers from favoring one type of content over another.

The market has changed since 2006 because the market for access to the internet has changed. Where once there were legions of dial-up providers and DSL resellers, we were seeing a few monopolies and duopolies dominating neighborhoods across the country. With their power to dictate where you could go and what you could see on the net, they had and continue to have the power to suppress those sites and those services that you would have chosen yourself in a free marketplace, driving them out of business.

Again, to lay out what this means for people who are following this, that means that instead of Netflix, YouTube, or Amazon, you could be forced to get your video content from something called go90, whatever the heck that is. It certainly isn't a service that has been able to compete in a free internet market. But all that changes when Verizon can charge you more to get to YouTube or Facebook than it costs to reach their own service.

Without strong net neutrality protections, AT&T might provide—and we always put it in quotes—''free data'' for customers streaming HBO. That is pretty good if you watch HBO, but without net neutrality, it could starve other creators and subscribers necessary to survive, until soon enough, as Senator FRANKEN has pointed out in some of our discussions, free data is gone. That is it. Free data goes away, and the American consumer—which is my fear when you think about what it really means to somebody sitting in Minnesota at home, and I see my colleague Senator MERKLEY from Oregon as well. The free data goes away under what I described, and the consumer at home in Minnesota or Oregon is stuck with few choices at higher prices than they have today. That is what the loss of net neutrality means.

I care deeply, as my colleagues do, about innovation and startups and small businesses. Senator WARREN was eloquent on this point. There are going to be a lot of people who aren't a startup. They are going to ask: What does it mean to me? What it means—I have just walked people through an example—is, that typical person is going to be stuck with fewer choices at higher prices.

Two years ago, Tom Wheeler, then the head of the Federal Communications Commission, put in place a strong framework, something with teeth that was enforceable, called title II of the Communications Act, to make sure the government, the FCC, had the tools to protect net neutrality.

Chairman Wheeler, like Chairman Pai, worked for industry for much of his career in Washington, but rather than serve his former employers, Tom Wheeler said: I am going to use my experience working in the private sector, my experience in how companies operate, to design and implement constructive and effective consumer protections. What a contrast between the two Chairs of the Federal Communications Commission. Both of them are from industry. Both of them did well in industry. We consider it a good thing in America that we have a prospering private economy. Tom Wheeler used it and that expertise to help the public. That is not what we are seeing today.

There isn't any need to fix what isn't broken. There are strong net neutrality protections in place right now. Since the 2015 rules went into place, our economy has grown up around this leading principle of equal access to information and customers.

The day before Thanksgiving, Chairman Pai released his proposal to strike down the 2015 rules that ensure real net neutrality but also prevent States from introducing their own approach to net neutrality.

Rather than listening to the millions of voices who spoke up on behalf of real net neutrality and against this proposal to allow pay-for-play or what I really call—I say to the Senator from Minnesota—a trickle-down telecommunications policy, which is to just let the big guys make as much money as they want, and maybe something eventually trickles down to rural Minnesota or rural Oregon.

Chairman Pai is going to keep pushing pay-for-play and is expected to ignore the will of the public and demolish net neutrality rules.

The first key vote is tomorrow, December 14. What I have been doing is spending a good chunk of my waking hours—obviously, we have the tax issue, which is enormously important. This is enormously important, too, to tell the American people this is a time to make their voices heard. My message to the American people on net neutrality is to get loud. This debate is far from over.

We know Chairman Pai plays a strong hand tomorrow—there is no question about that—but then it goes to the courts. Some of our colleagues are looking at approaches here on the floor. I want, as much as anything, to make sure the American people know we understand—Senator FRANKEN and Senator MERKLEY—that political change doesn't start in government buildings in Washington, DC, and trickle down is bottoms up. If ever there was an issue for bottoms up, it is net neutrality.

Not only are the majority of Americans opposed to Chairman Pai's proposal, many of the comments solicited for input are fake. These fake comments have been attributed to bots and false identities or linked to Russian IP addresses.

Any argument that this agency, the Federal Communications Commission, has a transparent process with comments from the American people is not true. This is not government for the people. This is government for the special interests.

Just a couple of other points, and let me wrap this up so my colleagues can have the floor.

Chairman Pai has been out there arguing falsely, in my view, that without title II protections, Big Cable will make more money and use those profits to invest in infrastructure. This is what I call the trickle-down theory about telecommunications.

First of all, the existing regime was called title II—tough rules. It has not been a roadblock in investment and broadband. In fact, cable giants have continued to invest in broadband infrastructure even when strong net neutrality protections were put in place in 2015.

Publicly available documents show that investment by internet service providers was 5 percent higher during the 2 years after strong net neutrality rules were adopted than for the 2 years prior. Comcast, for example, has increased its investment by 25 percent since 2013.

Big Cable, in their own statements, show that none of the major internet service providers told their investors that net neutrality protections negatively impact their investments. That is based on publicly verifiable documents.

What we have is Chairman Pai making the argument that net neutrality provisions with teeth are going to be pretty much the end of investment and sort of Western civilization as we know it. Public documents show otherwise.

Publicly available documents show otherwise.

The FCC Chairman once claimed that a policy of voluntary net neutrality would be another way to go. Any talk of a voluntary solution to net neutrality is just nonsense.

Allowing a net neutrality provider to follow net neutrality has about as much of a chance of working—there is about as much of a chance that the big cable companies will honor voluntary net neutrality as there is of getting Ava and William Wyden, my 10-year-old twins, to voluntarily limit the number of desserts they have at dinner. It is not going to happen. It is not going to happen, folks. It is not going to work for open and fair access to the internet; it wouldn't work with Ava and Will Wyden.

On the same exact date as the Federal Communications Commission produced its rulemaking rollback to title II, Comcast removed the pledge on its website that it does not prioritize internet traffic or create paid fast lanes—so much for voluntary policy.

In my view, the only way the potential of the internet can be fully tapped is by ensuring that one form of content is not provided a preference over another form of content by their internet service provider.

The Trump Federal Communications Commission is barreling ahead to blow up this level playing field that is so crucial to innovation and free speech.

I close only by way of saying that this is also a lifeline for the startups. Those startups are dreaming of being the next YouTube, Google, or eBay. This is not about Google or eBay. This is about the startups.

I would be staying to hear my colleague Senator FRANKEN make his remarks on net neutrality but for the fact that we are about to start the tax conference. I close my remarks where I opened them. Senator FRANKEN has been our go-to person on these issues since he came to the Senate. We are so grateful he looked at this issue through the prism of what it means for the person without power and clout. I thank him for his leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President. I thank the Senator from Oregon, my friend, for his extraordinarily kind words. He, too, has been a leader introducing the first net neutrality bill back in 2006, before I came to the Senate.

I rise to talk about tomorrow's vote at the FCC on a proposal that would throw out the strong net neutrality rules Americans have fought so hard for. They are rules that ensure that all content on the internet receives equal treatment from broadband providers regardless of who owns it or how deep their pockets are.

Plain and simple, these rules are about ensuring that the internet remains the platform for innovation, economic growth, and freedom of expression, as it has always been.

As I reflect on my time in the Senate, there are, of course, moments that stand out as particularly significant. One such moment came in February 2015, when American consumers and businesses celebrated the FCC's landmark vote to preserve a free and open internet by reclassifying broadband providers as common carriers under title II of the Communications Act.

While I had long urged the FCC to ground net neutrality rules in the agency's authority under title II, it wasn't just the outcome of this vote that made such an impression on me then, or now, as I am looking back.

The FCC's 2015 vote came after the agency received nearly 4 million public comments, making it the then most commented on FCC issue by a factor of three. The vast majority of these comments urged the agency to enact strong rules protecting net neutrality, protecting the equal treatment of all content on the internet, which has been the architecture of the internet since the very beginning. Americans from across the political spectrum organized to ensure that their voices were heard, and they were. This was democracy in action.

Now, as Chairman Pai pushes forward to undo the open internet order, we have seen another awe-inspiring demonstration of grassroots advocacy. Millions of Americans from every corner of the Nation and background imaginable are joining the movement online and in the streets to ask the chairman to rethink his dangerous proposal and to preserve net neutrality.

When things get tough, as they have, time and time again in the last year, Americans have resisted in protest. It is these movements that make the difference. Just look at the Republicans' failed attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

Ironically, the kind of civic participation that has aspired so many of us in recent months and has affected real change depends, in no small part, on an open internet. If the Chairman ultimately has his way, we will be entering a world where every voice might not matter, a world where a handful of multibillion-dollar companies have the power to bury sites offering alternative viewpoints or control how users get their information, a world where the deepest pockets can pay for a fast lane while their competitors stall in a slow lane.

See, it is because of net neutrality that people from across the Nation can connect with each other, share their ideas on the internet, and organize a community effort just like the Project Net Neutrality protests we have seen at Verizon stores across the country.

I have spent nearly the entirety of my time in the Senate pushing for strong net neutrality rules. I have always called it the ''free speech issue of our time'' because it embraces our most basic constitutional freedoms. Unrestricted public debate is vital to the functioning of our democracy. Now, perhaps more than ever, the need to preserve a free and open internet is abundantly clear, so we can't give up now.

Three years ago, the FCC sustained strong net neutrality rules, and millions of Americans voiced their support for them. The FCC must maintain and fully enforce the important court-tested rules that are already in place. Also, perhaps more importantly, the agency must respect the democratic process and the voices that made themselves so clear in 2014 and over the course of the last few months. There is just too much at stake.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Minnesota for being such a champion on this issue, and many others, where it is a question of whether we have government of and by the powerful or government by and for the people of the United States of America. We have seen issue after issue after issue this year on healthcare, on taxes, and now on net neutrality, and I thank the Senator from Minnesota for his advocacy.

Mr. President, last night we had an election. I have heard many of my colleagues on the Republican side say that elections have consequences. Now, however, we see that they are attempting to deliberately slow down the opportunity for the newly elected Senator from Alabama to come here and serve in the U.S. Senate. They took quite a different view when the question was a special election in Massachusetts, when a Republican Senator was elected to take the seat once held by Ted Kennedy. The Democrats concurred and the President of the United States, President Obama, concurred that he should be seated; that nothing should be jammed through in a fashion that tried to bypass the weight and opinion of the people of the State of Massachusetts in who would represent them. But this Chamber seems ready, under this majority leadership, to absolutely try to trample the people of Alabama, who said where they stand last night. This Chamber wants to deny them that voice here on the floor of the Senate.

Back a few years ago, in June of 2013, there was a House election in Missouri, and a Republican was elected to that empty seat. Jason Kander, the Democratic secretary of state in Missouri, said that he should absolutely be seated in Missouri's Eighth District. JASON SMITH, the candidate chosen by Missouri, was seated in the House of Representatives, I believe within 18 hours—within 18 hours—so the people of Missouri could have fair representation. So Democratic Senators and a Democratic President and a Democratic secretary of state in a Southern State said to honor the people of the United States. I call upon the majority leader to defend the people of Alabama and seat their Senator and do it under the same 18-hour standard.

We are here today to talk about another example of the powerful versus the people. We have seen time and time again, over the course of the last few months, the President of the United States standing up for the powerful and trying to crush the people of the United States, trying to rip healthcare from 30 million Americans in order to give special benefits to the richest Americans. We have seen the President of the United States sign in the Oval Office a measure that would enable a powerful company, when in a dispute with a consumer, to choose the judge, to pay the judge, to promise a judge future business. What kind of fairness is that for an ordinary American up against a powerful company, where the powerful company gets to choose a judge? Yet my Republican colleagues voted overwhelmingly to crush the opportunity of an ordinary citizen versus a powerful company in a consumer dispute.

Then we have the tax bill. The tax bill says that if you earn less than $30,000, you get a tax increase, and if you are in the middle class, 87 million of you will get an increase in your taxes. And by the way, we are going to give several trillion dollars to the very richest Americans and the most powerful corporations. It is another example of a bank heist on the National Treasury—our Treasury—to deliver benefits to the best off, to the richest in America.

Oregon is about 1 percent of the national population. If you take 1 percent of $1 trillion, that is $10 billion. I can tell my colleagues what we can do for families in Oregon with $10 billion. We can invest in needed infrastructure to have a stronger economy and put a lot of people to work with living-wage jobs. We can add teachers to our public school classrooms so that our classrooms offer better opportunity for our children to learn and to thrive. We can make college more affordable. We can improve our community health clinics to make sure healthcare is available to all, which is so critical to quality of life. But no. My Republican colleagues say: Let's give this money to the richest Americans. Let's raid the National Treasury and enrich the best off among us.

That is because we have a fundamental cycle of corruption in campaigns that is enabling such a bizarrely inappropriate bill to ever get heard on the floor of the Senate. I say ''bizarrely inappropriate'' because our government wasn't founded to mimic the powerful kingdoms of Europe that govern by and for the richest. We had a vision of government of, by, and for the people.

Now we have this issue of net neutrality, and once again President Trump and the Republicans are weighing in to crush ordinary people in favor of powerful corporations. The internet has become essential to all of us in our daily lives. We consult it to find out where to go to a restaurant or what movies are playing. We check the internet to find out what the sports scores are and what is the latest news. We order our airline tickets. We do so many things on the internet during the course of our everyday lives. Yet here is President Trump saying: We want to take that level playing field of fairness for consumers across America and let some powerful companies decide who gets to provide information, which websites to allow to have information and which ones we are going to slow down, whom we are going to put in the fast lane and whom we are going to put in the slow lane.

The internet is so critical to the freedom of information. This is really an assault on freedom of information. It was James Madison who said that ''the advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty.'' Yet my colleagues and President Trump want to give powerful companies the ability to control what information is shared in America.

Think of a highway. We have a highway and everyone gets to use it, and you can be in the slow lane if you choose because you want to save fuel, or you can get in the fast lane and pass somebody who is going more slowly. We don't have someone saying: Hey, we are only going to allow the richest Americans to drive in the fast lane. We are only going to allow the most powerful corporations to be in the fast lane. For the rest of you, you get to go to the slow lane. I don't care if there is a truck going 25 miles per hour, you are going to be stuck behind it unless you pay me a whole lot of money to get out of that lane.

The internet for the rich and powerful is wrong, and we have to stop it. If the Federal Communications Commission doesn't get the message this Thursday, we need to overturn their rule here on the floor of the Senate.

I get a chart each day showing me the calls from yesterday. Here I have a bar saying how many people called about net neutrality and which side of the issue they weighed in on. So 544 people called in favor of net neutrality, and according to this chart, zero people called in favor of powerful corporations instead controlling the internet. I have since been informed we did get 1 call, so let's make it 544 to 1 instead of 544 to zero. Have you ever seen an issue where you have that kind of ratio of ordinary people weighing in and saying: Don't let the powerful take over our internet. People want a level playing field for consumers, a level playing field for distributing knowledge, a level playing field for entrepreneurs so that the new startups can compete with the Googles and the Amazons of our country.

I ask you, if you had a choice between two websites last night to follow the election in Alabama and one was in the fast lane and could replenish its numbers instantly and one was going so slow that the numbers were going to take 5 minutes to get posted, which site would you have gone to? Of course you would have gone to the site that can update quickly. That is the point.

We shouldn't allow powerful companies to extort Americans over the information flowing through the internet. It is not fair to American citizens. It is not fair to American entrepreneurs. It is not fair to the distribution of knowledge. We must defeat it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, the good news about the tax bill that I believe we will pass over the next few days is that it will go into effect on the first day of January and people will quickly see, no matter how loud others are talking, the exact facts. For work done in January, people who get that check in January or February or whenever they get paid for their January work—there is going to be a substantial tax decrease for working families at all levels. Our friends want to talk about what happens after 2025 or 2027, but surely the Congress can do its job between now and then.

This is a pro-growth policy. There are two ways to increase people's take-home pay, and we are going to pursue both of them. One is to take less out of your pay right now. That will happen not a year from now and not a year and a half from now; that will happen next month. So next month, when people get their paychecks, it will be clear to them who had the facts and who didn't have the facts on this. The second way it will increase people's pay is by having better jobs to start with. Hundreds of economists who have looked at this bill say that it will make the United States of America the best place to invest money and create jobs, and I think we will know sooner rather than later that that happens.

So good tax policy, commonsense regulation, and judges—another thing we are working on this week—make a difference in how people look at the economy that they want to invest in and an economy that they want to grow. Why would judges make a difference? Judges make a difference because judges create a sense of fairness in the court. They create a sense of an ability to get your case heard. And they create a sense that what the law says hopefully is what the judge will decide rather than what the judge thinks the law should say.

We are making great progress in all of those areas if we add good tax policy to what has been happening.

Right now, Mr. President, we are talking about judges, and President Trump has a unique opportunity to shape the long-term view of the judiciary. This week we are going to confirm three circuit judges, and I wish to speak in just a little while about what that means.

At the start of President Trump's term, 12 percent of all of the Federal judiciary seats were vacant. No President has had that kind of opportunity

since President Clinton had that opportunity now almost 25 years ago when he started his first year. And the President will have the opportunity—and is making the most of it—to fill those vacancies.

I believe President Trump made the right choice when he selected Justice Gorsuch to serve on the Supreme Court. There was a record as a circuit judge; you can look at what he had decided. The Presiding Officer and I and other Members of the Senate can look at what he has decided and anticipate, after 10 years of that record, what his record would look like. It makes a difference. I have no doubt that President Trump will continue to nominate judges who will rule as did Justice Scalia, whose unfortunate death created the most recent vacancy.

Justice Scalia, by the way, served on the Supreme Court for 26 years after the person who nominated him left the White House and 13 years after President Reagan died. So the legacy of what happens here is important.

Justice Scalia was profound in his sense that the work of the Court was not to decide what the legislature should have done; the work of the Court was to decide what the law and the Constitution said. There are ways to change the law, and there are ways to amend the Constitution, but a person on the Court needs to look at what the Constitution and the laws say.

While Supreme Court vacancies tend to get a lot of attention, it is just as important that the Senate nominate and confirm the jobs the President and the Senate share. It is our responsibility too.

The Constitution could have said: Will report to the Senate, and, unless there is some big objection, that person becomes a judge. That is not what it says. It says: The Senate will confirm.

As of this morning, there are slightly more than 140 lifetime vacancies on the courts to be filled. So far this year, we have confirmed 10 circuit court judges. By the time we leave this week, I think we will have confirmed 12 circuit judges this year. That will be close to a post-World War II record. It has been a long time since World War II, and it has been a long time since a President has had the opportunity to do that.

Why do we need to do that? First of all, the people of this country have a right to seek justice and to believe that the rule of law will prevail. The Supreme Court hears about 100 to maybe 150 cases in a year, but the 12 circuit courts—where you appeal a lower Federal court ruling to—hear many cases, and about 7,000 of those cases are appealed to the Supreme Court; the Supreme Court deals with 100 to 150 of them. So the judges in the 12 circuits often write what, in our structure, is essentially final law; the final rule of any court is at the circuit level.

The Federal Bar Association says that the ''number of federal judicial vacancies throughout the federal court system is straining the capacity of the federal courts to [do their job].''

In cooperation with the President, we have a job to do here. The capacity to hear these cases is important. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Filling these vacancies is also critical to ensuring that the balance of the Constitution is in place. This was a brandnew idea when James Madison and others thought of putting a machine together. They sometimes referred to the Constitution as the instrument that would be the guideline for a machine—a machine that was so finely balanced that it would govern itself.

The courts—the judiciary—the legislative branch, and the executive branch all have unique powers, and those unique powers were designed to keep the government in check. This concept, new in 1787, has worked well for us, but it doesn't work if one of the groups is allowed to become out of balance. So filling these vacancies matters.

The leadership of the majority leader and the leadership of Chairman GRASSLEY in his committee make a difference. As we move forward with the confirmation process for three more nominees this week, we are advancing our goal of restoring the courts to judges who will determine what the law says, not what they think it should say.

I urge my colleagues to support these well-qualified nominees. But I also urge my colleagues on the other side to stop using the process to frustrate the other work of the government. There is a right to 30 hours of debate, which is what we are in right now; we are in 30 hours of debate on a circuit judge, but nobody is talking about that circuit judge. Other bills could have been brought to the floor, and other issues that could have been dealt with aren't being dealt with because the minority has decided to abuse their power—to say that we are going to have 30 hours of debate about this judicial nominee, and then have no debate about the judicial nominee.

It doesn't mean we don't need to confirm the judges, but it does mean, if we did so in a way that made sense for the people we work for, we would be doing other business now, and these three judges would have already been confirmed. They will be confirmed this week.

My belief is that if the rules designed to protect the minority in the Senate are abused, they will not last forever. Eventually, you have to say: OK, facts are facts. This rule isn't being used this way, and the Senate has to do the people's work. If rules have to be changed to do that, I am for changing those rules.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13, there be 30 minutes of postcloture time remaining on the Willett nomination, equally divided between the leaders or their designees; that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the confirmation of the Willett nomination; and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, this week is a great week for the State of Texas and for the Federal judiciary because this week we will be confirming two exemplary judges from the State of Texas to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit: Texas Supreme Court Justice Don Willett and former Texas Solicitor General Jim Ho. These will be the 11th and 12th court of appeals nominees who we will have confirmed this year—a modern-day record.

Indeed, I looked up just the other day the number of assigned slots on the Federal courts of appeals. It is 179. This means the 12 that have been nominated and confirmed this year represent roughly 7 percent of the appellate bench. That is a powerful accomplishment for the first year of this Presidency, a powerful accomplishment for this Republican majority in the Senate, and a powerful legacy that will extend decades into the future, protecting our constitutional rights, protecting the Bill of Rights, protecting the First Amendment, free speech, religious liberty, protecting the Second Amendment, and protecting all the fundamental liberties we enjoy as Americans.

With respect to Don Willett and Jim Ho, I have known both of them for decades. Both are close friends. Both are brilliant lawyers. Both have spent decades earning a reputation as principled constitutionalists who will remain faithful to the law and will not impose their own policy preferences from the bench.

Beyond that, both Don and Jim are testaments to the American dream. They have both taken different paths to the Fifth Circuit, but both of their stories encapsulate what is so incredible about this great Nation.

Justice Willett was born Donny Ray Willett—his birth certificate doesn't say Donald; it says Donny Ray—in July of 1966, to an unwed teenage mother. He was a sickly and frail newborn who was not even expected to survive until Christmas. But he was nursed back to health and then adopted by an incredible couple who were unable to have their own children.

Justice Willett grew up in a doublewide trailer in a small town of just 32 people, surrounded by cotton and cattle. His town had a cotton gin and a Catholic church. That is about it.

Justice Willett suffered heartbreak early in life. His father passed away at age 40, just 2 weeks after Justice Willett turned 6 years old. He was

raised by his widowed mother, who waited tables at the local truck stop. She would leave the trailer for her 6 a.m. shift before Justice Willett even woke up in the morning. He would wake himself up, get fed, dressed, and then catch the bus to a neighboring town to go to school.

Justice Willett was the first person in his family to even finish high school, let alone go to college and then to law school. He has four degrees. He got his bachelor's from Baylor with a triple major in economics, finance, and public administration. He then received a master's degree in political science, a law degree, and an LLM degree from Duke.

After law school, he clerked on the Fifth Circuit—the court on which he will soon be serving—for Judge Jerre Williams. Then, after 2½ years at a large law firm, he decided to dedicate his career to public service. He worked for Gov. George W. Bush in Texas and then for President Bush in DC. He and I worked closely together in that regard. After his time in DC, he happily returned to the great State of Texas to serve as the deputy attorney general for legal counsel. Don served alongside me, working under Greg Abbott, then the attorney general. We had offices just down the hall from each other.

In 2005, he was appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to serve as an associate justice on the Texas Supreme Court, and he was reelected by the people of Texas to that court in 2006 and again in 2012.

I can't tell you how proud I am to see Justice Willett confirmed as a judge on the Fifth Circuit and to see his lifetime of service continue in this new arena.

Jim Ho took a different path to the Fifth Circuit, but his story is just as powerful as an example of the American dream.

Jim was born in Taipei, Taiwan. He immigrated to the United States with his family when he was just 1 year old. For the first few years of his life, his family lived with relatives in Queens, NY. Jim learned English watching Sesame Street. His family then moved to Southern California, where he attended high school and then went on to college at Stanford University.

In 1996, Jim enrolled at the University of Chicago Law School, where he graduated with high honors in 1999. He then moved to Texas for the first time in his life, accepting a clerkship in Houston with Judge Jerry Smith on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit—again, the same court on which he is preparing to serve. It was during the end of his clerkship in Houston that he started dating his law school classmate, now his wife Allyson, a Houston native and another dear friend of mine.

In 2000, Jim moved to Washington, DC, to join the law firm of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher. In 2001, he joined the U.S. Department of Justice as a Special Assistant to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, working under now-U.S. Labor Secretary Alex Acosta. Later that year, he joined the Department's Office of Legal Counsel. After 2 years at OLC, he came here to the Senate, where he served as the first chief counsel of my colleague, the senior Senator from Texas, JOHN CORNYN. After 2 years as Senator CORNYN's chief counsel, Jim went to clerk at the Supreme Court for Justice Clarence Thomas.

At the end of the clerkship, Jim and Allyson finally fulfilled their dream of going back to Texas, where Jim rejoined the law firm of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher in Dallas.

Then, in 2008, my tenure as solicitor general of Texas was coming to a close. Attorney General Abbott had told me that if I were going to leave, I would have to find my successor. I picked up the phone and called my longtime friend, Jim Ho. I talked to Jim about coming to succeed me as solicitor general. Jim agreed to take on the job and did a remarkable job as the chief appellate lawyer for the State of Texas, representing Texas before the U.S. Supreme Court and all the State and Federal appellate courts.

Jim served as solicitor general from April 2008 until December 2010, when he returned to Dallas and once again rejoined Gibson Dunn as a partner. A few years later, he became cochair of the firm's appellate and constitutional law practice group. Jim has done many extraordinary things, but nothing more so than marrying his wife Allyson, who is, like Jim, a Supreme Court advocate and one of the most talented constitutional lawyers in the country.

Allyson is my former law partner. When I left the job of solicitor general and went to the Morgan Lewis law firm, I promptly recruited Allyson to come lead the Supreme Court practice with me. I am proud to say that over the past 5 years, Jim's wife Allyson has argued more business cases before the U.S. Supreme Court than any lawyer in Texas.

Jim has become a pillar of the legal community in Texas, and the outpouring of support he has received demonstrates that. To take just one example, I have a letter from Ron Kirk, the former mayor of Dallas and a former member of President Obama's Cabinet and, incidentally, the Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate who Senator CORNYN defeated in 2002. By any measure, he is a strong and prominent Democrat in the State of Texas. Mr. Kirk writes:

> The last time Texans got to fill a seat on the Fifth Circuit, it was Judge Gregg Costa, who this body confirmed by a well-deserved unanimous vote. As a lifelong Democrat and devoted member of the Obama cabinet, I ask you to give Jim Ho the same unanimous consent.

I agree, and I hope our Democratic friends in this body will set aside the partisan rancor that has so characterized this year and will listen to the words of one of their own, a member of Obama's Cabinet, and a prominent Democrat from Texas, urging that Jim Ho be confirmed unanimously.

Sadly, Senate Democrats insisted on and provided a party-line vote in the Judiciary Committee. It is my hope that this full body will demonstrate more wisdom and less partisan animosity than the Judiciary Committee Democrats demonstrated.

Both Jim and Don, I am convinced, will make excellent judges on the Fifth Circuit. They are brilliant. They are principled. They are humble men of deep character. They love their families. They are wonderful fathers. I am confident that not only will they faithfully follow the law in the court of appeals, but I predict Jim Ho and Don Willett will become judicial superstars. They will become jurists to which other Federal judges across the country look. Their opinions will be cited heavily. They will be followed in other courts of appeals. Their careful and meticulous analysis and their fidelity to the law will be held up as exemplars for judges across the country to follow. That is a great accomplishment for the Federal judiciary, a great accomplishment for the Senate, and a great week for the State of Texas.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Wyoming.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the tax relief and tax reduction legislation that the conference committee is currently working on. To me and to all Americans, this is a very important piece of legislation. I think it is going to get even better as the House and the Senate work to hammer out the differences to help lower the tax rates for American families.

When you look at this legislation, there are so many policies that will help to make America's economy grow. Families across the country will get a tax break. It is what they need. It is what they have been looking for, for a long time. Main Street businesses will also get a tax break. When people get a raise like that, they invest in their families, and they invest in their communities. They create jobs. Wages go up. The economy grows, and our Nation gets stronger.

You don't have to take my word for it. Respected mainstream economists are saying exactly the same thing. They agree that our economy needs to grow. They agree that the legislation we are working on—which passed the Senate, passed the House, and is being joined together—will deliver the growth that our Nation needs.

In October the Council of Economic Advisers put out a report looking at some of the ideas for tax relief. This is a group that advises the President on economic issues. Their report found that the tax plan, like the one Republicans wrote, will grow the economy between 3 percent and 5 percent. That is real growth. It is strong growth, and it is good news for America.

There was another study that came out in October. That was by a group of

economists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Boston University. They did their own calculations and used their own numbers, and they found the exact same good news for the American economy. Just like the other report, this one said that the Republican tax plan would grow the economy by between 3 percent and 5 percent.

A third study was released in November. It was by the Tax Foundation. Again, it is a respected group of economists who study this kind of issue for a living. They looked specifically at the legislation as it was introduced in the Senate Finance Committee and, then, passing the Senate. This group found that the plan would increase the size of the economy by 3.7 percent. That is the same range, between 3 and 5 percent, but more specifically, 3.7 percent.

Then, there was a fourth analysis by one more group of nine respected independent economists. This group wrote about their conclusions in a letter to the Treasury Secretary on November 26. They wrote that they expect this tax relief plan to boost the economy by 3 percent over the next 10 years.

We have four different entities, four different estimates, four different groups of prominent economists. They looked at the tax relief plan. They looked at it in different ways and used different analyses, and they all found that it would grow the American economy by very similar amounts, all by at least 3 percent.

There was one other study that some people have been talking about. This was an estimate by a group called the Joint Committee on Taxation. This group predicts that growth under the Republican plan will increase, but by just 0.8 percent over those next 10 years. That works out, roughly, to eight one-hundredths of 1 percent a year. All of these other groups say at least 3 percent, maybe 5 percent, and this other group says less than 1 percent over a decade. It is hard to believe.

Why is this one group, which is being quoted often by the Democrats, so far out of line, out of the mainstream, with what other economists are saying? The reason they reached such a different conclusion is that they did their analysis very differently from all the other groups. This committee combines a few different economic models into their estimate. That is reasonable. When we look closely at the models they combined, we found that they counted the most pessimistic models much more heavily than they did the more realistic models. So, of course, they are going to come up with an overly pessimistic conclusion.

I think it can be useful to take these more negative views into account. Nobody thinks we should just pick from the rosiest scenario or base our policies on one prediction. That is not what is happening here. We have four different groups of economists that predict strong economic growth of at least 3 percent. The one outlier is much more pessimistic, much more cautious.

Another thing to remember is that even this very cautious estimate says that the economy will get bigger because of the Republican plan than if we did nothing at all. Even the pessimistic group is saying: Oh, yes, the economy will grow under the Republican plan. They say it will reduce deficits by an additional $400 billion over the next 10 years.

I think we are going to do a whole lot better than that because our economy is going to grow much faster. Under President Obama and Washington Democrats, we had 8 years of policies that held back our economy and caused it to grow at a very tepid, slow pace. Economists looked at these policies, and they said that if things continue on that path, we can expect the economy to grow by about the 1.8 percent we have been seeing through the Obama administration.

With Republicans setting the agenda, those policies are history and so is this slow economic growth that had been created during the Obama years. Look what just happened in the last two economic quarters of this year. Over these 6 months, our economy grew at a pace of more than 3 percent. The economy has created more than 2 million jobs since President Trump was elected a little over a year ago. The economy is responding—responding to policies that Republicans have been talking about and to what we have been doing in terms of eliminating so many punishing, burdensome, expensive regulations that have caused such a drag on our economy.

When we pass legislation like this tax relief act, it will give businesses confidence that we are keeping our promises. It gives them confidence that they can keep hiring, keep investing, and keep creating more jobs.

Take a look at the fact that there are 2 million more new jobs since election day of last year. Someone said: Oh, no, you have to wait until Inauguration Day to start counting. I disagree. I will tell you that in my home State of Wyoming, on election night, when the results were in and it was known that Donald Trump had been elected President of the United States, there was immediate optimism, immediate confidence, and an immediate positive spring in people's steps. The decision at that point by the American electorate said: Yes, it is time for this economy to take off. And it has.

When someone comes out with an estimate about economic growth and they don't take into account all of these different things, I think, maybe, they are living in the past, when they were looking at an economic growth model of 1.8 percent. I think, maybe, they got so used to the anemic growth we had in the Obama years that they are still expecting that to continue into the future. They are not taking into account that things are different now, that Republicans are passing our economic plans, and that the burdensome regulations and the redtape has been cut. They are not taking into account that President Trump is in the White House.

Those things make a very big difference when it comes to sustaining this progress that we have seen over the past year. Four out of five studies agree that the Republican tax plan will deliver the kind of economic growth that the American people want and the American economy needs—a strong, healthy, and growing economy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am willing to wager that the term ''net neutrality'' has no meaning to many Americans. It is a term that refers to a practice and a set of rules that are likely a total mystery to the vast majority of the people who are affected by them. As often happens in Washington, DC, the terms of art are highly technical and obtuse and obscure, but the effects of these rules matter to almost every American, openly, and they will be of increasing importance to Americans if the current net neutrality rules are reversed tomorrow.

That is why I am here. The Federal Communications Commission, under the leadership of its new Chairman, Ajit Pai, has a reckless and needless plan to repeal those rules that are vital to a level playing field and fair access to consumers of the internet content that they value and need. To put it very simply, Chairman Pai's plan would disastrously disadvantage small businesses. It would harm our economy. It would threaten the internet's incredible success, including innovation. It would harm consumers by giving them higher prices and possibly lower speeds in accessing what they want from the internet.

The background here is pretty simple. In 2015, the FCC adopted its open internet order to preserve the open nature of the internet. The internet has thrived on its openness. That is, in a sense, its spirit and its great advantage. It is uniquely American in that way—open and accessible.

The order created three very bright line rules: no blocking, no throttling, no paid prioritization. Nobody could stop access or block it. Nobody could diminish the availability—no throttling and no paid authorization. That is to say that nobody is to get a benefit from faster speeds simply because he is paying more. Those rules really put the internet at stake—the vitality and innovative energy is at stake here.

Blocked sites, slower speeds, fast lanes and slow lanes, and more fees will

be our future on the internet if these rules are revoked, as Chairman Pai says they will be tomorrow. Some of today's internet service providers will benefit. They already have clear conflicts of interest. They own content companies. They want their customers to spend more time on their content. Comcast, for example, owns the media giant NBCUniversal. Verizon owns Yahoo and AOL.

We are having a hearing this afternoon that involves Comcast and NBCUniversal, and I am deeply troubled by the expiration of the conditions that have been put on the merger. Those conditions help to protect competition and consumers. They have a questionable effect in that purpose, but even the modest comfort or protection they provide will completely evaporate as the conditions expire. So I will ask today that there be an investigation by the Department of Justice to sustain and continue those conditions and ask that the court that approved them actually extend them to meet the needs of competition and consumers.

Our current net neutrality rules prevent companies from becoming gatekeepers, toll takers, in a way that favors their own content. If they are the gatekeepers and the toll takers, they are the ones who block, and they are the ones who collect the fees. If they have the ability to pick and choose between the content providers that belong to their competitors or the content providers that are independent, they are going to choose their own content providers. They are going to favor their own over the others. Gutting the net neutrality rules, in effect, gives them free rein to favor their own content and their own political views.

If the internet service providers are able to block content or charge higher fees for access, eventually the ones who will suffer will be the consumers. They will pay higher prices, or the content will be slowed in reaching them. Make no mistake. Companies that are willing to pay the toll for fast lanes will transfer those costs to consumers. They are not going to just absorb the additional expense. The folks who have no idea what the term ''net neutrality'' means—who may have never heard it—are the ones who are going to pay the freight. They are going to be the ones who suffer the consequences.

These rules are for a reason. They were not simply picked out of the air. They are not some product of some overactive regulatory imagination. They have meaning and consequence for ordinary people who use the internet, which is one of the economic giants of our generation. We are, in effect, throttling, blocking, and raising prices for the people who depend on innovation and access and openness.

The right thing for Chairman Pai to do is to cancel tomorrow's party-line vote and abandon this misguided plan to destroy the free and open internet. He is acting, in essence, at the behest of the economic giants—the cable companies—that stand to benefit because they will raise prices and favor their own content.

No matter what he decides, the fight is only really beginning. We will no doubt bring legislation to the U.S. Senate—not an easy task to pass it. Any final action in the FCC unquestionably, undoubtedly, will be challenged in the courts. I am actually hopeful that we can avoid litigation. Litigation is always a last resort. But there will be litigation because the 2015 open internet order was actually based on 10 years of evidence in a fact-based docket. Again, it was not pulled out of the air; it was based on factfinding and thought and redrafting that then, in fact, resulted in litigation that was upheld in the courts. In fact, in the court of appeals, it was judged to be legal and rationally rooted in real fact. That is the internet order that should be sustained.

I hope that Chairman Pai will postpone this misguided plan. I hope that he will abandon it. There is no need to recklessly repeal the net neutrality rules without demonstrating a significant and substantial change in factual circumstances. That is what is required statutorily—a significant and substantial change in factual circumstances to justify revoking and repealing a rule that was based on circumstance and fact.

In the meantime, millions of Americans have already given their opinions. They have weighed in. They have said to the FCC: Stop playing with the internet in a way that favors the big guys—the cable companies—the ones who will block or throttle and raise prices.

We should not allow Chairman Pai to silence their comments, to ignore them, or disregard them.

The FCC has a responsibility here. It is a public trust. It matters to the millions of Americans who have never heard and will probably never hear that term ''net neutrality'' and who will never understand what its consequences are until they see them personally, up close, firsthand—higher prices, blocking, throttling. That is the evil we can and must avoid.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ART AND NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES FUNDING

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the vital importance of the connection between the arts, education, and progress.

I am from a little town in Delaware named Hockessin. Hockessin was not much when I grew up there. We had about 1,500 people, some dairy farms and mushroom farms. Over the last 40 years, it has gradually developed.

A not much widely noted big day happened back in 1994 in Hockessin, DE, when one of America's greatest jazz performers, Cab Calloway, passed away in the little town of Hockessin, DE. Cab Calloway gave his name to a remarkable performing arts school. This is a school that 25 years ago was created dedicated to the idea that if you want to elevate learning, if you want to strengthen education, you should make sure you have a robust range of opportunities to engage with the arts.

I thought I would use that as an example today to talk for a few minutes about why what we do here can be important across our whole country and why a connection between the arts and education can make a lasting difference for families all across our country.

Back in 1965, when I was just 2 years old, a group of Senators, Republican and Democratic, came together to create two things—the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. These two federally funded national programs are absolutely critical educational, economic, and cultural drivers that have impacted thousands of communities across the United States.

Why is this a subject of any contention or discussion here? Well, because unfortunately our President's budget this year proposed to eliminate funding for both of these organizations—both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities—proposed to be removed, zeroed out, cancelled, despite their almost more than 50-year record of successful impact and service across the country.

In my little State of Delaware, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities funded all sorts of valuable programs with significant impacts. Last year, I invited the head of the National Endowment for the Arts to come and visit us in Delaware and to pull together the whole range of folks who received some grants from them—$681,000 last year. It is about 17 percent of all the funding for arts in my State. It helped support 100 grants to nonprofits all up and down our State.

I will give a few examples. The Grand Opera House has a summer in the park series because of the National Endowment for the Arts. The University of Delaware Community Music School holds a musical theater camp every summer, serving dozens of kids—about 80 kids. The Christiana Cultural Arts Center in downtown Wilmington brings vibrant, cutting-edge arts programming to a neighborhood that might not otherwise enjoy it. The Creative Vision Factory provides individuals with behavioral health disorders an opportunity for self-expression, empowerment, and recovery through the arts. I

can give many more examples, but these are four of the hundreds.

The National Endowment for the Humanities gives a comparable number of grants and supports programs up and down our State. I will mention one—art conservation at Winterthur. Winterthur, which is a magnificent museum and collection of the American arts, has a partnership with museums in places around the world—from Haiti, to Iraq, to Syria—where, because of conflict, critical pieces of cultural history have been at risk of being lost. Because of these NEH grants to Winterthur, those partnerships have been strengthened.

We have been blessed to have in my friend Governor Jack Markell and his wife Carla, over the last 8 years, strong, longstanding support for the arts in our State. We have lots of leading individuals in our State. Tatiana Copeland, for example, helped build the Queen Theater and helped support the Delaware Symphony Orchestra. They work in partnership with the Delaware Division of the Arts. A gentleman named Paul Weagraff is now the executive director of the Delaware Division of the Arts under the new administration of Governor Carney.

I am hopeful that we here in the Senate can sustain bipartisan support for arts and humanities funding and that the young people of Delaware, our communities, and our families will continue to enjoy the blessings that these investments in creativity bring. How much are we talking about? It is about $150 million—$149.8 million, to be specific—this fiscal year for each of these two endowments. That is a tiny percentage of the total Federal budget. Now, $150 million may sound like a lot, and $680,000 of grants for my whole State of Delaware may sound like a lot, but across these two endowments for the arts and humanities, $300 million in Federal money has a dramatic impact. It leverages private funding 9 to 1. In recent studies looking at the impact of the National Endowment for the Arts, they concluded that they were particularly focused and particularly effective and that where there is a leadership grant given by the NEA, it leverages $9 more for every Federal dollar used.

I think Federal funding for the arts and humanities has to remain a priority. I think it is important that we embrace the model that the Cab Calloway School has championed in Delaware and across the country where educational excellence is shown by working together with the expressive and creative arts.

It was William Butler Yeats—a famous Irish poet—who once said that education is not the mere filling up of a pail, it is the lighting of a fire. If you want to ignite the aspirations, hopes, and dreams of young people, don't just engage them in trigonometry, biology, chemistry, and physics—although those subjects can be interesting, engaging, or challenging—light the fire of their spirit with art, give their spirit room to soar, give them an opportunity to paint on the canvas of their lives, and give them the gift of artistic training and skills, and there is no limit to where they can go. That has been our experience in Delaware. That has been our experience across the country.

It is my hope that we will find a way on a bipartisan basis to continue to sustain investment in the humanities and the arts.

In 1960, President Kennedy said:

> There is a connection, hard to explain logically but easy to feel, between achievement in public life and progress in the arts.

Citing three important periods in history, he said:

> The age of Pericles was also the age of Phidias. The age of Lorenzo de Medici was also the age of Leonardo da Vinci. The age of Elizabeth was also the age of Shakespeare, and the new frontier for which I campaign in public life can also be a new frontier for American art.

It is important that we remember here that the modest amounts of Federal money we invest in the arts bear enormous positive, multiplied benefits to the people of our country and to our place in the world.

I am grateful for all who work in arts education, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work on a bipartisan basis to sustain our Federal investment in the arts and humanities.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HONORING NEBRASKA'S SOLDIERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN COMBAT

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to continue my tribute to Nebraska's heroes, the current generation of men and women who lost their lives defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of these Nebraskans has a special story to tell.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER CHRISTOPHER ALLGAIER

Today, Mr. President, I recall the life and service of CWO Christopher Allgaier, a native of Omaha, NE.

Growing up, Chris lived a pretty typical life as a Nebraska boy. During high school, he played video games and went to movies with his friends. With his family, he was a frequent visitor to Big Fred's Pizza in Omaha; the regular cheese pizza was his go-to. On Friday nights, he was known to go watch fellow classmates at high school football games, and on Saturdays in the fall, he did what a lot of Nebraskans do—he would attend or watch Husker football games.

Along with his sister Sharon and brother Rob, Chris grew up in a Catholic household. His family attended St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church in Omaha.

At Creighton Prep High School, Chris was a member of the Creighton Prep National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society, and the school science club. He was very dedicated to academics, and he graduated with the highest academic honors in 1991. During Chris's senior year at Creighton Prep, he became very interested in fixed-wing aircraft and flying.

After high school graduation, Chris continued his studies at another Jesuit institution, St. Louis University, where he continued his interest in aircraft by studying aeronautical administration.

Shortly after receiving his bachelor's degree, Chris enlisted in the U.S. Army. This surprised his family and friends. His father attributes Chris's decision to his son's sense of duty and interest in aeronautics. Chris graduated from basic combat training at Fort Jackson before attending his advanced individual training in aviation mechanics. The idea of Chris working in aviation mechanics always struck his father Bob as somewhat funny. Growing up, Chris didn't like getting his hands dirty or helping to change the oil in the family vehicles.

Due to his strong academic record and interest in aeronautics, Chris was persuaded to apply to Warrant Officer Candidate School. Chris liked the idea of becoming a warrant officer so he could specialize and become an expert in aviation. He graduated at the top of his class from Warrant Officer Candidate School and became a helicopter pilot.

While performing his duties in the Army, Chris also took classes at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He graduated with a master's degree in aeronautical science in 2001—the same year the September 11 terrorist attacks shook the lives of all Americans.

Chief Warrant Officer Allgaier deployed to South Korea for over a year before going to Afghanistan in 2003 and Iraq in 2005. While deployments are usually tough for any family, 2005 was especially difficult for the Allgaiers because Chris's mother Sally passed away.

In 2006, Chris was assigned to the 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 82nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, NC. The unit deployed to Afghanistan in 2007. He flew CH–47 Chinook helicopters in transport missions. During this time, Chris flew a lot of night operations. His father said that Chris would call him every couple of weeks between missions just to catch up. Those were phone calls that Bob always looked forward to receiving.

The Upper Sangin Valley in Helmand Province was the center of fighting in Afghanistan in 2007. A British newspaper called it ''the deadliest area in Afghanistan.''

On the night of May 30, 2007, Chris flew another night operation transporting approximately 30 servicemembers from the 82nd Airborne Division in the Upper Sangin Valley. Shortly after dropping the soldiers off for their important mission, insurgents shot down his CH–47 Chinook. The crash killed Chris and four other servicemembers.

Chief Warrant Officer Allgaier's memorial service was held on June 6 at a Catholic church in Omaha. Hundreds of people, including over 100 Patriot Riders, turned out to pay their final respects.

Chris was laid to rest on June 18, 2007, in Arlington National Cemetery. Fellow CWO Paul Wetzel said that ''losing Chris will definitely leave a void in the aviation community that can't be filled by anybody else. There will be other pilots in the future, but none will ever equal Chris Allgaier.''

Chris is survived by his wife Jennie and three daughters—Natalie, Gina, and Joanna.

In 2010, Chris was honored by the unveiling of Christopher Allgaier Street in the neighborhood in which he grew up. Rob discussed how his brother was his hero during the ceremony. He said:

> [Chris] didn't see himself that way. He didn't see himself as a martyr or as a hero. He was an American who was doing his duty. They're not doing it for an ulterior motive. They're doing it because they believe in it and it is the right thing to do.

CWO Chris Allgaier was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart posthumously.

I join Nebraskans and Americans across this country in saluting his willingness and his family's sacrifice to keep us free. I am honored to tell his story.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING CAPTAIN THOMAS J. HUDNER AND COLONEL WESLEY L. FOX

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, a month ago, we lost another Medal of Honor recipient, CAPT Thomas J. Hudner, who died at the ripe old age of 93. Not long after, we lost a second one, Col. Wesley L. Fox, who died at the distinguished age of 86. These are two different men who led two different lives, each equally deserving of praise and honor. Still, I can't help but wonder if there is a reason their deaths came so suddenly and close together. It is almost as if our Lord took them in one fell swoop so the greater loss would inspire greater gratitude for their sacrifice.

What Captain Hudner of the U.S. Navy did to earn his medal is remarkable for the simple fact that he could have been court-martialed for doing it. It was December 1950 in Korea. Just days before, the Chinese People's Liberation Army had crossed the Yalu River and thrown back U.S. forces on the cusp of victory. Then-Lieutenant Hudner was a naval aviator flying one of six Navy Corsairs near the Chosin Reservoir, 5 miles behind enemy lines, when he saw his squadron mate, ENS Jesse L. Brown, get hit by enemy fire and crash-land on a snowy mountainside.

What Lieutenant Hudner probably should have done is stick to the plan. What he did instead was an act of pure bravery. He intentionally crash-landed his plane not far from Ensign Brown's, tried to rescue him from the burning wreckage—all in subzero temperatures—but Ensign Brown was trapped. His knee was crushed between the fuselage and the control panel. When help arrived, their hatchet couldn't hack through the plane's metal, and no one could get close enough to amputate his leg. They had to leave him behind. Ensign Brown's last words were: ''Tell Daisy I love her.''

It might be appropriate to note here that Ensign Brown was Black and Lieutenant Hudner was White, but I mention it almost as an afterthought because to the two of them, that is just what it was—a postscript, an addendum, a mere detail. They were comrades in arms, wearing the red, white, and blue, not seeing the color of each other's skin. The only color that mattered to them, and that they shared in common, besides the color of our flag, was the navy blue of their uniform. Just 2 years after Harry Truman had integrated the Armed Forces, Lieutenant Hudner and Ensign Brown's friendship was a symbol of America's promise. He went on to have a successful career, but for giving us a moral example from that day, we should all be thankful.

Colonel Fox, meanwhile, was a legend in the Marine Corps. He served for 43 years, leaving only when forced to by mandatory retirement at the age of 62. In that time, he held every enlisted rank except sergeant major and every officer rank except for general. He once admitted:

> My first four years as a Marine I didn't own one stitch of civilian clothes—everything I did was in a Marine uniform. I'd go home on leave, working in the hay fields or whatever, I wore my Marine utilities. Go in town to see the movies, I wore my Marine dress.

That is just how proud Wesley Fox was to be a marine, and it was that deeply felt love for his fellow marines that drove him in his service. Like Lieutenant Hudner, he fought in Korea. In fact, he was wounded, and after he recovered, he was so eager to get back to the fight that he wrote to the commandant asking to be deployed once again.

The battle that earned him his place in history was in the jungles of Vietnam. It was February 1969, deep in the A Shau Valley in Vietnam. Then-First Lieutenant Fox was fighting in the last major Marine offensive of the war—Operation Dewey Canyon. His unit was Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. It earned the nickname ''The Walking Dead'' for suffering so many casualties during the war. They came under heavy fire from a larger force. Yet the fearless Lieutenant Fox led a charge against the enemy. He was wounded but refused medical attention, instead concentrating on leading the attack, coordinating air support, and supervising the evacuation of the dead and injured.

It was a stunning show of valor, and for it, he, too, would earn the Medal of Honor. His citation read, in part:

> His indomitable courage, inspiring initiative and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of grave personal danger inspired his Marines to such aggressive action that they overcame all enemy resistance and destroyed a large bunker complex. Captain Fox's heroic actions reflect great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps, and uphold the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

As I said, these were two different men and two different stories but the same courage and service to the same great country. They showed the same selflessness—one risking his life for his friend and the other risking his life for his marines. So I think it is fitting that we celebrate their lives together because they both showed us the utter selflessness of courage. They didn't fight and display such bravery because they hated our enemies but because they loved our country, and they loved their comrades in arms. It is a good lesson, I would say, for this time of year.

So I want to honor the memory of CAPT Thomas J. Hudner and Col. Wesley L. Fox. They were true American patriots, and may they rest in peace.

REMEMBERING THOMAS GALYON

Mr. President, last year, I stood on this floor and said a few words about a fellow Arkansan: Thomas Galyon of Rogers. We had just met to discuss his work with the Arkansas chapter of the National ALS Association. He had been diagnosed with ALS in 2014, and never one to let the grass grow under his feet, he had been a tireless advocate for ALS research ever since then.

Well, I am sorry to report that Tom died last month on November 22. He lived 3 years after his diagnosis, which is about average these days for people with ALS. With his death, the National ALS Association lost one of its great champions.

Tom was always bursting with energy. He was born in 1946 in Abingdon, VA, and he graduated from Emory & Henry College. He spent 33 years in the tourism industry, and after a rather brief and, I must say, failed stint in retirement, he went back to work as the property manager for the Center for Nonprofits at St. Mary's in Northwest Arkansas. As luck would have it, the ALS Association was headquartered in that very building, so he could give both organizations his all.

When we met last year, Tom asked me to help fix a problem that people with ALS have when applying for disability insurance. There is a 5-month waiting period to receive benefits, you see. Though that might be a prudent anti-fraud measure in many cases, for people with ALS, it consumes a lot of their remaining time in this world. So I joined with Senator WHITEHOUSE to sponsor the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act, which would waive the waiting period for people with ALS. Tom's death should be a reminder of the urgent need to defeat this disease and to finally pass this bill into law. It is the least we can do to commemorate a man who gave this effort so much because, even in death, Tom's commitment was complete. By his request, his brain and spinal cord were donated to the Brain Bank of Miami, FL, to continue the search for a cure for ALS. It is not hard to understand why.

He himself used to stress the positive in every situation. His motto was ''Blue skies always,'' and he certainly did all he could to bring blue skies into his life and the lives of those around him.

So now that he has joined our Heavenly Father in the blue skies, I want to recognize him and the family he leaves behind: His wife of 44 years, Sally Armstrong, their two children, and their two grandchildren.

Our State is better off for Tom having lived in it, and all of us are better off for having known him. May he rest in peace.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Maryland.

AMERICA'S GLOBAL DIPLOMACY AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to share my deep concern over the current state of America's global diplomacy. A multitude of decisions made by this administration in the last year have caused me to pause and repeatedly ask why, but in no area have I been more perplexed than the actions that have taken place at the State Department.

Ever since the Secretary of State took the helm, there has been a slow, unexplained erosion of the Department and, along with it, the values that it promotes and the vital role it plays around the world. By now, many are familiar with the list of concerns that seasoned diplomats, national security officials, and Members of this body have been raising with increasing alarm over the last weeks and months.

More than 30 key ambassadorships remain without named nominees. Dozens of important senior-level posts remain vacant. Career officials are being cut out of important policy decisions or overruled by leadership, including, sometimes, even on legal issues. The Foreign Service is being hollowed out, with a significantly lower number in the incoming classes, putting at risk the next generation of leaders. Opportunities for midlevel employees are extremely limited, with a freeze on most transfers and promotions. Our most experienced officials—the Department's equivalent of 2-, 3-, and 4-star generals—have been departing or, effectively, forced out and not replaced at the same rate.

I honor the experienced career officials who are stepping in to fill vacancies and are carrying out the Department's important work, but there are limits to what officials can accomplish in an acting role. It is now December. We cannot afford to have a Department that remains hamstrung because of rudderless stagnation at the top.

Let's be clear. This is not just about numbers or unfilled positions. The numbers do not tell the full story. While the employees at the State Department and USAID can and have been carrying on, it is not an easy task when employees feel that the message they receive from the top is that they and their work are not valued. Understandably, this has an impact on morale, which is now devastatingly low.

In embarking on what has been dubbed a ''redesign'' of the Department, the leadership at State has regrettably left the men and women who so capably and loyally serve it behind. I have heard from many employees who are not just concerned about their own future or careers but who are concerned about the direction of the Department itself and the viability of its legacy. The State Department's leadership has had more than enough time to assess what can be improved. It is beyond time to show the men and women serving at State and USAID that they are not only a valued but a vital part of our national diplomacy and national security strategy.

For weeks, Secretary Tillerson has promised to announce significant progress on his plan to move the Department forward. Tuesday, in a speech to the State Department and USAID personnel, the message was once again underwhelming. Secretary Tillerson continues to tinker around the edges while the Department's core functions are deliberately hollowed out.

While I am encouraged to see him announce a few small but important steps in the right direction, I am worried that he still has not gotten the overall message. Despite calls from me and others on the Foreign Relations Committee and pleas from current and former employees, diplomats, and military leaders, Secretary Tillerson has yet to lift the hiring freeze that remains in place. He announced it would be lifted for the family members of employees—a welcome step but not enough. Freezing or limiting opportunities for family members to join their spouses who are serving abroad never made sense in the first place.

I am, therefore, still left wondering why the hiring freeze has been in place at all, when nearly every other Federal agency lifted it earlier this year. I cannot understand how it has benefited our foreign and civil service. So again I am left asking: Why? Why should we tolerate a massive exodus of diplomatic and development expertise at the State Department and USAID? Our President said recently that we do not need to worry about the fact that many of the senior-level positions at the State Department remain unfilled because when it comes to foreign policy, his opinion is the only one that matters. Why on Earth would he say that? For the thousands of Foreign Service officers around the world working to advance the ideals of the United States, this was a horrible and offensive message.

I am concerned that this administration does not understand how critical a role the State Department and USAID play in our national security policy. They are every bit as vital and critical an element of our national security as the Department of Defense, the intelligence community, our law enforcement, or the countless others in the Federal Government who work tirelessly every day to protect our security, extend our prosperity, and promote our values.

We put our country in danger when we do not give adequate voice and resources to all of our country's national security tools. Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said: ''In a turbulent and perilous world, the men and women of the Foreign Service are on the front lines every day, on every continent for us.''

Diplomacy is an investment we make so that we don't have to go to war. Nickel-and-diming it is not in our national security interest.

I made no secret about my deep concerns regarding the current management practices of the Department's leadership, the reorganization and budget debacles, the current senior-level vacancies, and the deep costs that our Foreign Service and development professionals are paying. The United States' foreign policy leadership around the world is also paying the price, and we will continue to pay the price if things aren't turned around quickly.

Even with the few changes Secretary Tillerson announced this week, I believe there are still multiple issues that need to be addressed. I raised many of them recently in a letter to the Secretary with my fellow Democratic colleagues on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. If the Secretary truly wishes for the State Department and our country to succeed, he will seriously consider the following concerns:

First, improve transparency. All Senators on the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee should receive regular briefings that thoroughly address proposed reorganization plans and decisions.

Second, we need to know the details and timeline for reorganization. The Department must provide a clear timeline—something it has failed to do to date—and provide details about what it is planning.

While there are some parts of the reorganization that we find to be positive, such as improving information technology, I remain concerned that the reorganization may be marginalizing or eliminating critical bureaus and offices that help to inform U.S. foreign policy. I understand that many of these ideals may not come to fruition, but it is essential for us to receive details in a timely way so that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee can carry out its critical oversight function. Again, we are now in the eleventh month of this administration, and we don't yet know when they are going to be submitting their plans for reorganization, and we have not been kept adequately informed.

Third, I would mention filling senior vacancies. The Department must prioritize key senior vacancies and work with the White House to swiftly move forward qualified nominees. The significant vacancies for senior-level management and policy positions in such critical bureaus as Counterterrorism and Political-Military Affairs are deeply troubling. Approximately 30 countries still do not have named Ambassador nominees, including South Korea, Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Despite claims that the Senate's slow pace is to blame for the lack of confirmed nominees, the fact is that the Foreign Relations Committee has promptly processed the vast majority of nominees, and only a handful are currently awaiting a Senate vote. We cannot confirm nominees who have not been nominated.

Finally, let me talk about the need to uphold the mission of the Department. The Department's mission statement must continue to reflect the values we hold as Americans. Proposed changes send a troubling signal about the administration's vision for the Department and its role in foreign policy. The promotion of democracy and respect for human rights around the world must remain a central part of the State Department's overall mission.

I agree that improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department is critical to our national security given the countless challenges we face as a nation. Reforms to information technology, human resources, and procurement systems are long overdue, and I support the efforts of the Department to streamline special envoys and special representative positions.

I hope, moving forward, the Department will consider Congress as a partner in these endeavors, as well as broader efforts to strengthen America's diplomatic capabilities. However, if the Department continues down its current path, I can assure you that my colleagues and I will use every legislative option we have to address these concerns.

My goal is to ensure that the employees in the State Department have all the resources and support they require to complete their tasks and ensure that the United States remains a global diplomatic leader. I will do everything in my power to guarantee that this goal is accomplished.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. HASSAN. Thank you, Mr. President.

NET NEUTRALITY

I rise today to join my colleagues to oppose the Federal Communications Commission's planned vote tomorrow to dismantle net neutrality rules. As this proposal has been considered, I have been troubled by the impact this decision will have on consumers and small businesses, as well as by the process itself, which has been seriously flawed with regard to gaining public input on this critical issue.

Access to a free and open internet is at the forefront of the lives of nearly every American. Consumers, entrepreneurs, innovative small businesses, and, in turn, our Nation's economy, have all benefited from equal access to content on the internet, no matter the internet service provider. An open internet has been essential to civic engagement, social and economic mobility, and the fight to make progress for our underrepresented populations, just as we saw with the national Women's March at the beginning of this year, which was largely organized through online activism. An open internet is critical to our economy and our democracy, and net neutrality has guaranteed this equal access. But tomorrow's vote by the FCC would change all of that.

Under the plan from FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, the control of the internet experience will be taken from the consumer in Keene or the small business in Nashua and handed over to their internet service providers. Undoing net neutrality would give broadband providers the power to discriminate against certain web pages, applications, and streaming and video services by slowing them down, blocking them, or favoring certain services while charging more to access others. This is particularly disturbing at a time when many consumers have, at most, one or two options for broadband providers, leaving those who don't like the steps a provider is taking without a choice to change.

Additionally, dismantling net neutrality rules will hurt small businesses and will stifle innovation. Under these rules, internet service providers would be allowed to force businesses to pay to play online. While larger, well-established companies would likely be able to compete, startups and entrepreneurs across the Nation might not be able to afford such fees, causing instability and limiting the reach of their new businesses.

In New Hampshire, innovative small businesses are the backbone of our economy, creating good jobs and stimulating economic growth. But undoing net neutrality could limit the ability of that next great business to get off the ground.

A Manchester small business owner recently wrote to my staff to say: ''I believe that Net Neutrality should stay in effect as it allows every business to be on the same footing.'' The business owner also said that under this proposal, ''If you are leveraging the internet to boost your business, it will affect it dramatically.''

That business owner is not alone. Just today, several members of the rural and agricultural business community in New England, including Stoneyfield from Londonderry, NH, wrote to Chairman Pai to say: ''Repealing net neutrality would have a crippling effect on rural economies, further restricting access to the internet for rural business at a point in time where we need to expand and speed this access instead.''

Hundreds of people have called my office to voice their support for net neutrality. People across the Nation recognize that the plan proposed by the Republican-led FCC will truly impact their way of life.

In response to Chairman Pai's proposals, millions have also written to the FCC to state their position on this issue, but it seems that this process has been corrupted, with internet bots placing hundreds of thousands of comments in favor of repealing net neutrality. Roughly 400,000 of those comments may have, it seems, originated from Russia email addresses. Additionally, 50,000 consumer service complaints have been excluded from public record, according to a Freedom of Information Act request filed by the National Hispanic Media Coalition.

On any FCC decision, public input is vital, and on this decision, which impacts every single American, it is unacceptable that the public's opinion may have been distorted by fraudulent comments and additional anomalies.

Last week, I—along with 27 of my colleagues—wrote to Chairman Pai calling for a delay in this vote until we have a clear understanding of what happened during the policymaking process. Unfortunately, Chairman Pai has continued rushing toward this vote, and, as has been all too common with the Trump administration, the Republican-led FCC is favoring the priorities and voices of corporate special

interests rather than listening to hard-working Americans who want to keep net neutrality.

The Commission has failed to address the concerns that these comments are artificially generated, has not held one public hearing on net neutrality, and is moving forward at an alarming pace, without regard for what eliminating these rules would mean for our economy and our consumers.

Undoing net neutrality will fundamentally change the concept of a free and open internet that so many Granite Staters and Americans have come to know and have benefited from. Approving this plan would be a reckless decision.

I am going to continue fighting for priorities that put consumers first, that help small businesses innovate and thrive, and that advance an open and free internet.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor to once again talk about the need to pass tax reform for hard-working Americans. The House has passed a bill, the Senate has passed a bill, and now, of course, we are working through the conference committee to get the very best product we can for the American people.

This tax relief is not just about reducing the tax burden on hard-working Americans and making sure they can keep more of their hard-earned dollars after tax, but it is also very much about economic growth. The tax relief package we are putting together that is coming together through the conference efforts, working to improve on both the House version and the Senate version, is designed to grow our economy. That is incredibly important because over the last decade, what we have seen are stagnant wages and income. So workers are working as hard as ever—harder than ever—but they are not seeing that growth in their paycheck. That is why we have to make this tax relief package pro-growth, so at the end of the day, that worker has a lower tax burden, but they also have a rising wage and more income. It is the combination of those two things that really—it is the rising tide that lifts all boats, if you will. That is how we generate that higher standard of living for workers and taxpayers across this great Nation.

So that is what we are working to do: tax relief, grow the economy, create more jobs—and create them here at home versus overseas—and higher wages and income.

These are just some of the statistics from the tax relief package that we put together. These are provided by the nonpartisan Tax Foundation as well as the White House Council of Economic Advisers. The objective is to grow wages by $4,000 over the 10-year scoring period, making sure our workers are seeing real wages. The estimate right now is that this tax bill is pro-growth and will generate, on average, $4,000 in higher wages, combined with an average tax cut of about $2,200. That is an average family—a family of four with median income.

It will generate almost 1 million new jobs, and that is what, of course, pushes wages higher. When you create more jobs, it is that demand for labor that pushes wages higher. That is how it works. We are talking about almost 1 million new jobs over the 10-year period and a 3.7-percent larger economy. So growing the economy, creating more jobs, and it is that demand for labor on the part of business that pushes wages and income higher.

When we look at the next chart I have, we see that we provide tax relief across all incomes. So it is really focused on lower income, middle class, making sure that, like I said, wage earners are saving more of their hard-earned dollars, but the effort is to cut taxes across all income groups, and that is what we do. It starts by taking the seven brackets we have and reducing them. It is just kind of simple math.

The House plan reduces the number of brackets to only three. We keep the seven different brackets. The reason for that is because the objective is to lower everyone's tax rate, and we are better able to do that by keeping the seven tax rates.

Some might say: You want to do simplification. We do want to do simplification, and we do tax simplification. There is no question that we do tax simplification because the complexity in calculating your taxes is calculating your taxable income, your adjusted gross income subject to taxes. That is the complicated part. Whether we have three different rates to apply to it or seven different rates to apply, depending on which bracket you fall into, that really doesn't add complexity.

So we keep the simplification intact while we make sure that we provide tax relief across all of the different tax brackets or tax rates. That is what we see in this second chart.

In addition, we keep or expand many of the tax deductions or tax provisions that are important to families, and that starts with the child tax. Well, I should say it actually starts with the standard deduction. We double, in essence, the standard deduction. For an individual, right now it is a little over $6,000 a person. We double that standard deduction to $12,000. For a married couple, you are talking over $24,000 that is covered under the standard deduction, no tax.

In addition, if you are an individual and you have dependents, either children or maybe taking care of a parent or something like that, you get $18,000 in that standard deduction. Why is that important? Because by doubling that standard deduction, we go from 7 out of 10 filers not itemizing to something like 9 out of 10 tax filers not itemizing. This means real simplification. It means doing your tax return on maybe just a one-page form. This means you are not only reducing rates but also greatly simplifying the Tax Code.

We keep other provisions that are very important for American families and, in fact, enhance them. For example, the child tax credit is doubled. So not only do we double the standard deduction, but we also double the child tax credit. We go from $1,000 to $2,000 per child. This is going to make a huge difference for families.

Also, for family businesses, family farms, and small business we double the estate tax, the death tax unified credit, and include the step-up in basis. It is hugely important to make sure you can transition a small business, farm, or ranch from one generation to the next.

To save for college, we enable the 521 savings accounts to continue for parents. Another very important one is we encourage businesses to provide paid family and medical leave by giving them a tax credit to partially offset an employee's pay while caring for a child or family member.

Other things we keep, in terms of deductions that are very important, again, to hard-working families are as follows:

The mortgage interest deduction. We make sure they can continue to deduct the interest on their home mortgage.

The deduction of charitable contributions. It is obviously very important for the greater good of our society that people can continue to contribute to charities they believe in and support and that they can deduct those charitable contributions.

The child and dependent care tax credits, the adoption tax credit, and the earned-income tax credit. We make sure people can continue to contribute to their 401(k) accounts on a basis that is tax-advantaged.

Then, medical expense deductions. Obviously, for our seniors, this is very important. For somebody who has a medical condition or an illness, being able to deduct those medical expenses is extremely important.

This is about making sure hard-working Americans can have not only tax relief but also the pro-growth aspect they see in the rising wages of incomes.

That is what I want to talk about in this third chart, which goes to supporting our businesses across this great country. Small business is the backbone of our economy. Small businesses, farms, and ranches are the absolute backbone of our economy. Small businesses typically are passthrough businesses, which means the income flows

through the business and is then taxed at the individual level. So part of the tax relief we are providing to small businesses comes from the reduction in the individual rates, as I have already gone through, because that income has flowed through.

Passthroughs can be a partnership, a sub-S corporation, a limited liability partnership, a limited liability corporation. These are all passthroughs. So when the income flows through that small business to the individual, because we have lowered the rates, that already provides a lower net tax on those small businesses and the people who own and work and invest in those small businesses.

The other thing we do is provide a 20-percent distribution deduction—a reduction in the taxable amount as far as income distributed by those businesses. We have gone through various iterations. We started at about 17 percent. We had hoped to move it higher. I think we will end up around 20 percent. What this means is, when income flows through that passthrough business, 20 percent is deducted before you calculate the income. For example, if you flow through $1,000, you would be taxed on the $800. Now, apply those lower tax rates I talked about, and you can see clearly that you significantly reduce that tax rate on these small businesses.

Why is that so important? It enables small businesses to keep more of their hard-earned dollars, to invest in equipment, to expand and grow their business. It enables them to hire more people, like perhaps these great young people we have here working as pages. It enables them to raise wages and income and to grow their business, or, for an entrepreneur, to maybe start up a business.

So it is those dollars that instead of going to taxes, stay with the business. They are invested in the businesses, create more jobs, more opportunity, and higher wages. That is the pro-growth aspect of this tax relief I mentioned at the outset.

The other way this tax is really pro-growth is also for larger C-corps bringing down that rate. Of course, smaller businesses use the C-corp as well, but by bringing down that rate, we make companies in America more competitive in the global economy. Companies that do business not only here in America but in other countries around the world have to decide where they are going to invest. Are they going to invest and grow their plant and operations here in America or are they going to grow their plant and operations somewhere else? Of course, if they grow here, they are hiring people here. They are paying wages and salaries here in America rather than in some other country. We want companies that do business internationally or globally growing their operations here, not overseas.

Right now, economists estimate that, currently, in excess of $2.5 trillion is held overseas by these companies and is not brought back to the United States and invested here because we have one of the highest tax rates in the world. Our corporate tax rate is one of the highest in the world.

So when we talk about the current 35-percent tax rate, companies look at that and say: Why would we bring back earnings from another country, say, Ireland—pick a country anywhere in the world. Why would we bring those earnings back and pay a really high tax, versus reinvesting overseas or somewhere else where the tax is much lower, and we can be more competitive?

This is what we are having to deal with, and that is why we lower the corporate rate—because that then creates the incentive to come back, invest dollars in the United States, and create more jobs here in America, and, in so doing, as they bring that revenue back, which is called repatriation, they generate tax revenues which help us provide more tax relief for hard-working Americans.

So that is what I mean. That is the two-fer aspect of this tax relief plan. It is making sure individuals have real tax relief so they keep more of what they earned, but it is also about making sure they earn more, that their wages and income grow, and that there are more jobs and opportunities here in America. That is absolutely the focus of this tax relief plan and what we are working to achieve.

Both the House and Senate have passed versions of this tax bill. We are now working to get the very best product we can through the conference committee. We are making real progress, and we need to continue to work together and get this tax relief done. We have been working on it for a long time. A lot of effort has gone into it. It is time now to finish it up this week, to vote on it, and to get this tax relief passed before the end of the year so, as Americans go into 2018, they know they are able to keep more of their hard-earned tax dollars and we also have a vibrant economy, where there is going to be more jobs and opportunity and higher income and wages.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). For the information of the Senate, under the previous order, 30 minutes of postcloture time remained on the Willett nomination as of 4 p.m.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I was interested to hear my colleague and friend from North Dakota talking about this tax bill because, sadly, there has not been a lot of bipartisan work on the bill.

I really agree there is a consensus that tax reform is it long overdue, but we need tax reform that simplifies the Tax Code, bolsters the middle class, and helps small businesses create jobs. I think those principles could have been the basis for really good bipartisan work here in the Senate, and in Congress, generally, to come up with a bill that would have done all of those things, but, unfortunately, the legislation in front of us does none.

The result is a partisan tax bill, written in secret and without public hearings, adds to the national debt, punishes the middle class and small businesses, and gives massive tax cuts to corporations and the wealthy.

Last week, I came to the floor to share the concerns of Granite Staters about this legislation. They were amplified at a forum I had on Monday at Southern New Hampshire University, where I heard from students, graduate students, and higher education leaders in the State about the damage this bill would do to our State and to our national economy.

I have heard some reports today that there will be changes that come out of the conference committee that may address some of the concerns about the bill's impact on education. I hope that is true. Unfortunately, I haven't heard what those changes are. I don't know if any Democrats here have heard what those changes are. Unfortunately, these negotiations, like the bill, are being done in secret, and the future of students and so many people in New Hampshire and the country hang in the balance.

In particular, what I heard at the forum with the students and educators was that the bill as it passed the House would raise taxes on New Hampshire students and would make it financially impossible for many of them to continue their educations.

As passed, the House tax bill would eliminate the ability of individuals to deduct the interest they pay on their student loan debt. Nationwide, student loan debt has roughly tripled since 2004 and now totals a staggering $1.3 trillion—more than the total credit card debt in the country. It is particularly burdensome for those of us in New Hampshire because New Hampshire's 2016 graduating class had the highest per capita student loan debt in the country—an average of $36,367.

The Republican leader's tax bill would make this crisis far worse not only for current students but for those who graduated many years ago but are still burdened by student loan debt. It would prevent nearly 80,000 Granite Staters from deducting interest on their student loans.

The House legislation would also make it far more expensive to get an advanced degree because it eliminates tax-free waivers for tuition assistance. I am hearing recent reports that this provision may be taken out of the final bill. I certainly hope that is the case because as currently written, it would put graduate school financially out of reach for many students.

A Dartmouth College student pursuing a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences wrote that counting tuition waivers as earned income would raise his yearly taxes by more than $10,000. He said he

would no longer be able to afford rent and groceries and would have to consider dropping out of school.

Ken Ferreira, the associate vice president for student financial services at Franklin Pierce University, told me, in no uncertain terms, that tuition waivers are not income, and it is wrong to tax them. I could not agree more.

Tyler Kane is pursuing a master's degree in environmental engineering at the University of New Hampshire. He told me he already owes close to $40,000 in student loans and works nearly 60 hours a week. After paying rent and other expenses, his stipend leaves him with less than $200 a month. If his tuition waiver becomes taxable, that would be a tax increase of $2,500, and it would wreck his budget, leaving him in a $33-a-month hole. Along with many of his graduate student colleagues, he would have to consider dropping out of school.

It makes no sense to increase the burden of student debt and to impose new taxes on graduate students struggling to get by so we can give the biggest corporations in this country and the wealthiest a tax cut.

It is estimated that by 2020, two-thirds of all jobs in the United States will require some form of higher education. Yet today less than 45 percent of Americans have at least a 2-year degree. As I talk with small business owners across New Hampshire, one of their biggest challenges is finding skilled workers. The last thing we need to do is make education more expensive and unaffordable for millions of young Americans. As one New Hampshire businessman told me, it is like eating our own seed corn. For the United States to stay competitive in the global economy, we can't afford to discourage talented young people from going to college or pursuing a graduate degree.

I also had the opportunity to talk with Nate Stafford. He is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Hampshire. Because he serves as a teaching assistant, the university provides a tuition waiver of nearly $27,000, which would be taxed under the provision of the House bill. If his tuition waiver were taxed, that would force him to consider opting out of graduate school entirely.

I also heard from university administrators, who shared their concerns.

Sister Paula Marie Buley, president of Rivier University, pointed out that the proposed new taxes on students is ''a tax on our future.''

Jan Nesbit, the senior vice provost for research at the University of New Hampshire, warned that taxing graduate students' tuition waivers would have a cascading impact that would raise undergraduate tuition across the board because losing graduate students would affect both teaching assistants and research and drive up costs.

I heard from Cari Moorhead, the interim dean of the graduate school at the University of New Hampshire. She pointed out that many international students at UNH would be lost and noted that Canada has recently seen more than a 40-percent increase in international students. They are very pleased to be benefiting from the brain drain from the United States because of the financial barriers that we are putting up for graduate students.

The other damaging aspect of this legislation, which I think many people are not aware of, is that the tuition assistance that many companies provide to their employees would count as taxable income. Forty years ago, Congress provided employers with the flexibility to offer up to $5,250 in annual tax-free educational benefits to employees. This was designed to advance competitiveness and fill the need for more skilled workers. If we eliminate those benefits, how many of those employees who are looking to advance themselves through education will not be able to do that?

In so many ways, this tax overhaul legislation would take America backward, not forward. Tax reform should be about helping Americans prepare for the jobs of the 21st century; it shouldn't make it harder to afford college or graduate school. Tax reform should be about strengthening the middle class, not burdening it with higher taxes. Tax reform should be about growing the economy, not growing the deficits and the debt.

Like my colleagues on this side of the aisle, I am eager to work to genuinely reform the Tax Code. Reform is long overdue, but the bill we have before us is not reform. We need a bipartisan bill that puts the middle class first, puts small businesses first, and doesn't leave a massive debt for our children and grandchildren.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, all the nearly 50,000 children who are on West Virginia CHIP want this Christmas is to have their healthcare. That is not a lot to ask for from a child.

As a legislative body, we were elected to serve the needs of all of our constituents, and that includes protecting our most vulnerable—our children. How many times do you hear us give speeches, whether it is in this body or whether it is back home—it is all about our children. The future of our country is about our children. The future of our State is about our children. Our future generation—whatever we do, the promise of the world—is about our children. And all they are asking for is to have their healthcare.

It seems as though we are so consumed with partisan gridlock and posturing that we would allow the expiration of health insurance for children. It is almost unconscionable for us to be in this situation, and the children have no control of their own healthcare coverage, and their parents can't really afford basic healthcare. They are the working people who are above the poverty guidelines and doing everything they can to put bread on the table and take care of their families, and their children have no access to healthcare without CHIP.

On September 30, Congress not only failed to reauthorize a bipartisan, noncontroversial program for children, we failed the 9 million children in this country who rely on the program to stay healthy. There are 9 million children who are depending on CHIP, the funding of CHIP, and the basic priorities we should have for our most vulnerable, and we have done nothing. Our No. 1 job as Senators, as parents, and as human beings is to care for and protect our children, but this body cannot even find the humanity to do that.

In West Virginia alone, almost 50,000 children use CHIP over the course of the year, and more than 20,000 children who are currently on the program are going to lose it in February when the money runs out. Through CHIP, these children have access to basic medical care, which includes prescriptions, immunizations, dental coverage, vision, and mental health coverage. For more than 2 months, their healthcare has been hanging in the balance because of the negligence of the body, our dysfunction, playing Democrat and Republican at a higher level of our party than our purpose of being here, which is to do our job.

Millions of families are in a state of uncertainty, worrying about how to pay for their child's basic healthcare needs or, for many families, lifesaving services. I believe it is our duty to ensure that our children are taken care of, for they are truly our country's future and legacy. I believe that no matter how much your family makes or where you come from, the most important thing you have is healthcare for your children so that they have a healthy start.

There are five promises every adult should make to a child. This was started under Colin Powell, the five promises.

The first one is, every child needs to have a loving, caring adult in their life; someone who they know unconditionally loves them, right, wrong, or indifferent. It is not always the biological parents or biological family. It could be a neighbor. It could be someone reaching out. It could be a church or service. It could be an afterschool program.

Second, every child must have a safe place. A safe place might not always be the home where they live.

Third, every child must have a healthy start. We talked about nutrition. We talked about healthcare. That is part of it. If we can't teach a child how to keep themselves healthy, how to take care of themselves nutritionally in all different ways, they are not going to grow up to be a productive adult. They will have health concerns. They will have health challenges. It is up to us to make sure they have that healthy start.

Fourth, every child should have a livable skill. That means education. In this country, we make sure every child has free education, K–12, and we make sure there is assistance so they can go through a college program. If we can work with them and help them with financial literacy, they wouldn't be bound with so much debt. I think we can help in a lot of different ways.

The fifth promise is the hardest one to teach. It is the hardest one because this promise is that every child should grow up to be a loving, caring adult and give something back. If these children see that we don't care and that our priority is not healthcare and that having a healthy start in life is not one of our priorities, what are they going to do when it is their turn, when they become the responsible adults? What are they going to do? Are they going say: Well, you know, I don't know, we didn't have too good of an example because we saw all the bickering and fighting back and forth, politics trumping everything, so I guess maybe that is not a big priority for us.

I hope they have more discipline than we have had here. I hope they have more compassion, more empathy than we have shown. That is what I hope. I hope that we change our ways now and make sure our failure to come together stops and stops now and that we come together for the CHIP program and the healthcare for every child who depends on this for a healthy start in life.

That is why I stand before you today—to encourage my colleagues to come together and find a solution and protect healthcare for over 9 million children across this country. I have talked to families and children all across West Virginia who are at risk of losing their healthcare coverage.

For many families, CHIP is a temporary helping hand while they are down and out. It is a perfect example of how, in West Virginia and in America, we put out a hand to help those people in need. There is a difference between a handout and a hand-up. These people need a hand-up when they hit hard times.

I have a letter from a mother in West Virginia.

I have encouraged the people of West Virginia to put a real family, a real face behind the challenges they have so that it is not just something we are speaking about in a political arena—it is basically something that happens in real life, and it is affecting people.

This letter comes from Annetta:

> My name is Annetta, and I am the mother of a now 18-year-old son named Dalton. WVCHIP is important to me because when Dalton was 15, it was discovered he had a pituitary brain tumor as well as a condition known has Chiari malformation. If you are not familiar, Chiari is a condition where the brain protrudes out the back of the head, similar to a herniated disc in the spine. Most times, Chiari requires surgery to relieve pressure out of the head.
>
> I had lost my health insurance at work and could not afford to get a private insurance during this time. Thankfully I was approved for CHIP. His neurosurgeon nor his endocrinologist ever had any issues accepting CHIP; they didn't have any issues with authorizations for MRIs or bone scans, which he had every few months.
>
> I am very thankful to have had insurance like CHIP, and I feel there are so many children like my precious son that will suffer if the program ends. I feel some could be detrimental to not only the children but also the parents who are not eligible for Medicaid services. We live in a state where jobs are not so plentiful and the ones we have pay much less than other States.
>
> I hope WVCHIP is saved.

This is a mother reaching out, saying that her son was saved because of CHIP. She couldn't afford it. She was above the poverty guidelines. She was working and trying to make it, and someone told her it might be more advantageous to go on welfare. There is still an awful lot of pride and dignity in people's lives. They will fight for that dignity, and we ought to fight to give them assistance during the toughest times.

I am calling on my colleagues to right this wrong and to reauthorize CHIP before we leave for Christmas. There are so many deadlines we are trying to make. I know the speed the tax bill is moving through is because it is a priority to get done before Christmas. Even though we don't have a crisis, even though the stock market is doing greater than ever, even though unemployment is lower than ever, there is a timetable at warp speed that this is moving through. Yet we have not addressed what we need most, which is healthcare for our children. I don't know where the urgency is for tax reform that would trump the urgency and the need for healthcare for children.

With that, I urge all of my colleagues to please take a look at this, and let's correct this wrong and not go home for Christmas until all these children have healthcare.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Willett nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 315 Ex.]

YEAS—50

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Alexander | Flake | Perdue |
| Barrasso | Gardner | Portman |
| Blunt | Graham | Risch |
| Boozman | Grassley | Roberts |
| Burr | Hatch | Rounds |
| Capito | Heller | Rubio |
| Cassidy | Hoeven | Sasse |
| Collins | Inhofe | Scott |
| Corker | Isakson | Shelby |
| Cornyn | Johnson | Strange |
| Cotton | Kennedy | Sullivan |
| Crapo | Lankford | Thune |
| Cruz | Lee | Tillis |
| Daines | McConnell | Toomey |
| Enzi | Moran | Wicker |
| Ernst | Murkowski | Young |
| Fischer | Paul | |

NAYS—47

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Baldwin | Gillibrand | Nelson |
| Bennet | Harris | Peters |
| Blumenthal | Hassan | Reed |
| Booker | Heinrich | Sanders |
| Brown | Heitkamp | Schatz |
| Cantwell | Hirono | Schumer |
| Cardin | Kaine | Shaheen |
| Carper | King | Stabenow |
| Casey | Klobuchar | Tester |
| Coons | Leahy | Udall |
| Cortez Masto | Manchin | Van Hollen |
| Donnelly | Markey | Warner |
| Duckworth | McCaskill | Warren |
| Durbin | Menendez | Whitehouse |
| Feinstein | Merkley | Wyden |
| Franken | Murphy | |

NOT VOTING—3

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cochran | McCain | Murray |

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

## CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Michael B. Enzi, Johnny Isakson, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Cory Gardner, James E. Risch, Jeff Flake.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 316 Ex.]

YEAS—53

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Alexander | Flake | Paul |
| Barrasso | Gardner | Perdue |
| Blunt | Graham | Portman |
| Boozman | Grassley | Risch |
| Burr | Hatch | Roberts |
| Capito | Heitkamp | Rounds |
| Cassidy | Heller | Rubio |
| Collins | Hoeven | Sasse |
| Corker | Inhofe | Scott |
| Cornyn | Isakson | Shelby |
| Cotton | Johnson | Strange |
| Crapo | Kennedy | Sullivan |
| Cruz | Lankford | Thune |
| Daines | Lee | Tillis |
| Donnelly | McCaskill | Toomey |
| Enzi | McConnell | Wicker |
| Ernst | Moran | Young |
| Fischer | Murkowski | |

NAYS—44

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Baldwin | Gillibrand | Peters |
| Bennet | Harris | Reed |
| Blumenthal | Hassan | Sanders |
| Booker | Heinrich | Schatz |
| Brown | Hirono | Schumer |
| Cantwell | Kaine | Shaheen |
| Cardin | King | Stabenow |
| Carper | Klobuchar | Tester |
| Casey | Leahy | Udall |
| Coons | Manchin | Van Hollen |
| Cortez Masto | Markey | Warner |
| Duckworth | Menendez | Warren |
| Durbin | Merkley | Whitehouse |
| Feinstein | Murphy | Wyden |
| Franken | Nelson | |

NOT VOTING—3

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cochran | McCain | Murray |

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to executive session for consideration of Calendar No. 193, the nomination of Owen West to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. I further ask that there be 30 minutes of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate; and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to executive session for consideration of Calendar No. 241, the nomination of J. Paul Compton to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. I further ask that there be 120 minutes of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate; and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## REMEMBERING CAPTAIN ERIC BALLIET

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and honor the extraordinary service and sacrifice of Captain Eric Balliet of the Fort Wayne Fire Department. Service to his community and compassion were qualities that defined Eric's life.

Eric was a 19-year veteran with the Fort Wayne Fire Department who devoted his life to the Fort Wayne community. A compassionate and devout father, husband, friend, and leader, Eric was someone whom everyone knew and loved in the community. He will be remembered as a hero.

On September 27, 2017, Eric was leading a training exercise. After performing the physically demanding drill, Eric suffered a heart attack and passed away. He led the fire department as a captain, and Fire Chief Eric Lahey called Eric's passing ''a great loss for the Fort Wayne fire department.'' Lahey also said, ''He was a good firefighter. A good man. We're going to miss him.'' At the time of his passing, Eric was eligible and scheduled for promotion to the rank of battalion chief and was promoted posthumously to that rank. He put his life on the line so that Hoosiers could have the chance to live in peace and safety, and we are eternally grateful.

Eric was born and raised in Fort Wayne. He graduated from Northrop High School in 1994 and earned an associate's degree from Ivy Tech. He not only served his community as a firefighter but also as a paramedic with Three Rivers Ambulance Authority, a deputy coroner with the Allen County Coroner's Office, captain of traffic division in the Allen County Sheriff Reserves, and dean of campers at the Great Lake Burn Camp.

Eric was a member of Pathway Christian Church. He adored his two children and loved spending time with them. He was known for his ability to make anyone laugh and for his genuine care for everyone he came across. He is remembered for his service and sacrifice.

He is survived and deeply missed by his wife, Alicia, and their twin children, Lucas and Alyssa; father, Gail; mother, Deborah; brother, Aaron; sister, Tina; grandparents, in-laws, nieces, nephews, and cousins; and his fellow firefighters. He loved his job as a Fort Wayne firefighter, and no amount of gratitude can repay Eric or his loved ones for his sacrifice.

Through his compassion and his dedication to his community, Eric exemplified Hoosier values. His memory will not soon be forgotten. May God welcome Eric home and give comfort to his family and friends.

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

### TRIBUTE TO MEKENNA CARMAN

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to MeKenna Carman for her hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

MeKenna is a native of Arizona. She is a student at Arizona State University, where she is studying political science. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank MeKenna for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It was a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her next journey.•

### TRIBUTE TO AUTUMN JENSEN

• Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Autumn Jensen for her hard work as an intern in my Cheyenne office. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Autumn is a native of Lander. She is a sophomore at the University of Wyoming, studying political science and statistics. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The

quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Autumn for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.●

## TRIBUTE TO JAKE KENNEDY

● Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Jake Kennedy for his hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Jake is a native of California. He is a graduate of Bucknell University, where he studied political science and government. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Jake for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

## TRIBUTE TO ALEX LUPSAIU

● Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Alex Lupsaiu for his hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize his efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Alex is a native of California. He attended the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Oxford, where he studied philosophy. He has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made him an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of his work is reflected in his great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Alex for the dedication he has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have him as part of our team. I know he will have continued success with all of his future endeavors. I wish him all my best on his journey.●

## MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:04 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1208. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9155 Schaefer Road, Converse, Texas, as the ''Converse Veterans Post Office Building''.

H.R. 1733. An act to direct the Secretary of Energy to review and update a report on the energy and environmental benefits of the refining of used lubricated oil.

H.R. 2872. An act to amend the Federal Power Act to promote hydropower development at existing nonpowered dams, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2880. An act to amend the Federal Power Act to promote closed-loop pumped storage hydropower, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3638. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 Kings Road in Jacksonville, Florida, as the ''Rutledge Pearson Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3655. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 Main Street in Belmar, New Jersey, as the ''Dr. Walter S. McAfee Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3971. An act to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify the requirements for community financial institutions with respect to certain rules relating to mortgage loans, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4171. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend the authority to conduct telework travel expenses test programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4285. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 Bridgeton Pike in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, as the ''James C. 'Billy' Johnson Post Office Building''.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), as amended, the Minority Leader re-appoints the following individuals to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission, effective January 1, 2018: Ms. Carolyn Bartholomew of Washington, DC and Mr. Michael Wessel of Falls Church, Virginia.

## MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1208. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9155 Schaefer Road, Converse, Texas, as the ''Converse Veterans Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1733. An act to direct the Secretary of Energy to review and update a report on the energy and environmental benefits of the refining of used lubricating oil; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2872. An act to amend the Federal Power Act to promote hydropower development at existing nonpowered dams, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2880. An act to amend the Federal Power Act to promote closed-loop pumped storage hydropower, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 3638. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 Kings Road in Jacksonville, Florida, as the ''Rutledge Pearson Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3655. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 Main Street in Belmar, New Jersey, as the ''Dr. Walter S. McAfee Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3971. An act to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify the requirements for community financial institutions with respect to certain rules relating to mortgage loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 4171. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend the authority to conduct telework travel expenses test programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4285. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 Bridgeton Pike in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, as the ''James C. 'Billy' Johnson Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

## EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–3675. A communication from the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Investment Company Reporting Modernization'' (RIN3235–AL42) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 12, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–3676. A communication from the Division Chief of Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Waste Prevention, Production Subject to Royalties, and Resource Conservation; Delay and Suspension of Certain Requirements'' (RIN1004–AE54) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 8, 2017; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–3677. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Voluntary Consensus Standards Update; Formaldehyde Emission Standards for Composite Wood Products; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–38) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3678. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Renewable Fuel Standard Program: Standards for 2018 and Biomass-Based Diesel Volume for 2019'' (FRL No. 9971–73–OAR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3679. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Finding of Failure to Submit a Section 110 State Implementation Plan for Interstate Transport for the 2012 Annual National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Fine Particles'' (FRL No. 9971–88–Region 10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3680. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Contingency Measures for the 1997

PM2.5 Standards; California; San Joaquin Valley; Correction of Deficiency'' (FRL No. 9972–02–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3681. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval of Missouri Air Quality Implementation Plans; Infrastructure SIP Requirements for the 2012 Annual Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5) National Ambient Air Quality Standard; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–68–Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3682. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval of Missouri Air Quality Implementation Plans; Infrastructure SIP Requirements for the 2010 Nitrogen Dioxide National Ambient Air Quality Standard; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–69–Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3683. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; New Mexico; Albuquerque and Bernalillo County; Regional Haze Progress Report State Implementation Plan'' (FRL No. 9971–43–Region 6) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3684. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; Removal of Clean Air Interstate Rule Trading Programs Replaced by Cross-State Air Pollution Rule Trading Programs; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–56–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3685. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Virginia; Amendment to Ambient Air Quality Standard for Ozone; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–41–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3686. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania's Adoption of Control Techniques Guidelines for Automobile and Light-Duty Truck Assembly Coatings; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–93–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3687. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Adoption of Control Techniques Guidelines for Control of Volatile Organic Compound Emissions from Miscellaneous Metal Parts Surface Coating, Miscellaneous Plastic Parts Surface Coating, and Pleasure Craft Surface Coatings; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–98–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3688. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Minnesota; Regional Haze Progress Report; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–78–Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3689. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; District of Columbia; Interstate Transport Requirements for the 2010 1-Hour Sulfur Dioxide Standard; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–70–Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3690. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; Regional Haze Progress Report; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–75–Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3691. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; Michigan; Regional Haze Progress Report; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–80–Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3692. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; Illinois; Regional Haze Progress Report; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule'' (FRL No. 9971–79–Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3693. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; Florida; Stationary Sources Emissions Monitoring; Withdrawal'' (FRL No. 9971–72–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3694. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Plan Approval; CT; Decommissioning of Stage II Vapor Recovery Systems'' (FRL No. 9966–28–Region 1) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3695. A communication from the Deputy Chief Counsel, Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revolving Loan Fund Program Changes and General Updates to PWEDA Regulations'' (RIN0610–AA69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 8, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–3696. A communication from the Regulations Coordinator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medicare Program; Cancellation of Advancing Care Coordination Through Episode Payment and Cardiac Rehabilitation Incentive Payment Models; Changes to Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement Payment Model: Extreme and Uncontrollable Circumstances Policy for the Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement Payment Model'' ((RIN0938–AT16) (CMS–5524-F and CMS–5524-IFC)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 11, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–3697. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2017–0206—2017–0213); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–3698. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''United States Tobacco Product Exports That Do Not Conform to Tobacco Product Standards''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–3699. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a petition to add workers who were employed at the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) in Scoville, Idaho, to the Special Exposure Cohort; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–3700. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the fiscal year 2016 annual report for the Department's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; to the Committees on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; the Judiciary; and Select Committee on Intelligence.

EC–3701. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–190, ''Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Support Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3702. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–191, ''At-Risk Tenant Protection Clarifying Temporary Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3703. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–192, ''Operator's Permit and Drug Offense Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3704. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–193, ''Exhaust Emissions Inspection Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3705. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report

on D.C. Act 22–194, ''DMV Services Amendment Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3706. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22–197, ''Mobile DMV Act of 2017''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3707. A communication from the Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3708. A communication from the Vice President for Congressional and Public Affairs, Millennium Challenge Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Corporation's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3709. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Labor's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3710. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management, the President's Pay Agent, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the extension of locality based comparability payments; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3711. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Education Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3712. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Federal Housing Administration's fiscal year 2017 Annual Management Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3713. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's fiscal year 2017 Annual Financial Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–3714. A communication from the Human Resources Specialist, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, (20) reports relative to vacancy announcements within the Department; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–3715. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, a report relative to H.R. 3354, the Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

## EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. THUNE for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Barry Lee Myers, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Rear Adm. (lh) Pat DeQuattro and ending with Rear Adm. (lh) David G. Throop, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 16, 2017. (minus 2 nominees: Rear Adm. (lh) Steven J. Andersen; Rear Adm. (lh) Keith M. Smith)

*Coast Guard nomination of Rear Adm. Andrew S. McKinley, to be Rear Admiral (Lower Half).

*Coast Guard nomination of Capt. James M. Kelly, to be Rear Admiral (Lower Half).

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Capt. Thomas Allan and ending with Capt. Matthew W. Sibley, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on October 23, 2017.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDs on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with George Bamford and ending with Tabitha A. Schiro, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 16, 2017.

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Stephen J. Adler and ending with Torrence B. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 16, 2017.

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Lawrence F. Ahlin and ending with Russell R. Zuckerman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on November 16, 2017.

*Coast Guard nomination of Meghan K. Steinhaus, to be Commander.

By Mr. BARRASSO for the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

*R. D. James, of Missouri, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army.

By Mr. ALEXANDER for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

*James Blew, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, Department of Education.

*Kate S. O'Scannlain, of Maryland, to be Solicitor for the Department of Labor.

*Mitchell Zais, of South Carolina, to be Deputy Secretary of Education.

*Preston Rutledge, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

*William Beach, of Kansas, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, for a term of four years.

*Scott A. Mugno, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

*Johnny Collett, of Kentucky, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. JOHNSON, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2223. A bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 to clarify forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration services under good neighbor agreements; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2224. A bill to establish best practices for teaching financial literacy, and to establish an annual estimate of student borrowing costs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 2225. A bill to reauthorize the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 2226. A bill to prohibit recipients of disaster recovery relief assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development from penalizing applicants that declined assistance from the Small Business Administration; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2227. A bill to reauthorize the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 2228. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for accreditation reform, to require institutions of higher education to publish information regarding student success, to provide for fiscal accountability, and to provide for school accountability for student loans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

## SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. Res. 359. A resolution commending the Government of Bangladesh for its compassion during the Rohingya humanitarian crisis and commending Pope Francis for his message of peace; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. Res. 360. A resolution calling for international accountability for the crimes against humanity committed by the Burmese military against the Rohingya in Burma; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

## ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 925

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 925, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the ability of health care professionals to treat veterans through the use of telemedicine, and for other purposes.

S. 1055

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of

S. 1055, a bill to restrict the exportation of certain defense articles to the Philippine National Police, to work with the Philippines to support civil society and a public health approach to substance abuse, to report on Chinese and other sources of narcotics to the Republic of the Philippines, and for other purposes.

S. 1118

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1118, a bill to reauthorize the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes.

S. 1161

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1161, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate copayments by the Department of Veterans Affairs for medicines relating to preventative health services, and for other purposes.

S. 1835

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1835, a bill to provide support to States to establish invisible high-risk pool or reinsurance programs.

S. 2038

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2038, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a presumption of herbicide exposure for certain veterans who served in Korea, and for other purposes.

S. 2076

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2076, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the expansion of activities related to Alzheimer's disease, cognitive decline, and brain health under the Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2152

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2152, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for assistance for victims of child pornography, and for other purposes.

S. 2159

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2159, a bill to require covered harassment and covered discrimination awareness and prevention training for Members, officers, employees, interns, fellows, and detailees of Congress within 30 days of employment and annually thereafter, to require a biennial climate survey of Congress, to amend the enforcement process under the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights for covered harassment and covered discrimination complaints, and for other purposes.

S. 2184

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2184, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve veterans' health care benefits, and for other purposes.

S. 2200

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2200, a bill to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System, and for other purposes.

S. 2219

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2219, a bill to reduce the number of preventable deaths and injuries caused by underride crashes, to improve motor carrier and passenger motor vehicle safety, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 139

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 139, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

### SENATE RESOLUTION 359—COMMENDING THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH FOR ITS COMPASSION DURING THE ROHINGYA HUMANITARIAN CRISIS AND COMMENDING POPE FRANCIS FOR HIS MESSAGE OF PEACE

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 359

Whereas Bangladesh has taken in Rohingya refugees fleeing persecution in Burma since the 1970s;

Whereas at least 300,000 Rohingya refugees were still in Bangladesh prior to August 25, 2017;

Whereas an August 25, 2017, attack on security posts in Burma by the military group Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army resulted in a brutal and methodical reprisal by the Burmese military on Rohingya villages;

Whereas more than 624,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh since August 25, 2017, alone, most located in or near the coastal city of Cox's Bazar;

Whereas the Rohingya refugee crisis is the fast-growing refugee crisis in the world;

Whereas the Government of Bangladesh has accepted nearly 1,000,000 Rohingya refugees in total despite facing their own domestic challenges;

Whereas the Government of Bangladesh has notably allowed full access for international relief organizations;

Whereas, on September 22, 2017, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged before the United Nations General Assembly an end to the violence against the Rohingya and full implementation in Burma of the recommendations made by Kofi Annan's Advisory Commission on the Rakhine State;

Whereas, on November 23, 2017, the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of Burma signed a Memorandum of Understating on a repatriation agreement;

Whereas the Memorandum of Understanding on a repatriation agreement is modeled after a flawed 1992–1993 repatriation pact between Bangladesh and Burma, and does not resolve critical questions on the potential repatriation process for Rohingya refugees, including verification of residency, where refugees would be permitted to return, and whether they would enjoy equal access and rights;

Whereas, on November 25, 2017, the Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Abdul Hassan Mahmood Ali said that Bangladesh would support the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees being involved in any process to repatriate Rohingya refugees to Burma;

Whereas Pope Francis, who has been recognized for his humility, dedication to the poor, and commitment to dialogue and reconciliation, has previously denounced the ''persecution of our Rohingya brothers'' who were being ''tortured and killed, simply because they uphold their Muslim faith'';

Whereas Pope Francis traveled to Burma on November 27, 2017, and urged ''a peace based on respect for the dignity and rights of each member of society, respect for each ethnic group and its identity'';

Whereas Pope Francis, in a visit to Bangladesh on November 30, 2017, recognized the generosity of Bangladeshis in caring for Rohingya refugees and called on the international community to ''take decisive measures to address this grave crisis, not only by working to resolve the political issues that have led to the mass displacement of people, but also by offering immediate material assistance to Bangladesh in its effort to respond effectively to urgent human needs''; and

Whereas the United Nations has estimated a need of $434,000,000 to respond to the Rohingya refugee crisis: Now, therefore be it

*Resolved,* That the Senate—

(1) commends the Government of Bangladesh for its admirable compassion and tolerance in accepting Rohingya refugees;

(2) commends the United Nations agencies, nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners, and all aid workers providing relief to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and urges the Government of Bangladesh to continue to help coordinate critical humanitarian work and ensure ease of access for those carrying out such efforts;

(3) urges the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of Burma to consult and coordinate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, and NGO partners on any and all safe and voluntary repatriation efforts;

(4) urges the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of Burma to address the flaws of the November 23, 2017, Memorandum of Understanding on repatriation through consultation and agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

(5) urges all parties involved in the repatriation process to reject any actions which could continue or worsen the harsh conditions faced by Rohingya refugees, including the confinement of the Rohingya in camps, contained ghettos, or villages were movement is restricted in Burma, or on the flood-

prone Bhashan Char island in the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh, or any other location that would result in further isolation; and

(6) commends Pope Francis for his thoughtful remarks about the future of Burma that respects rule of law, the democratic order, and the dignity and rights of all of its people.

## SENATE RESOLUTION 360—CALLING FOR INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY COMMITTED BY THE BURMESE MILITARY AGAINST THE ROHINGYA IN BURMA

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 360

Whereas actions by the military of Burma, known as the Tatmadaw, including continuing assaults on personnel and territory controlled by armed ethnic organizations, military offensives immediately preceding and following national peace conferences, and human rights abuses against noncombatant civilians in conflict areas, undermine the confidence in establishing a credible nationwide ceasefire agreement to end Burma's civil war;

Whereas Burmese military officials have a long-standing history of targeting ethnic groups and armed ethnic organizations in Burma, in addition to the Rohingya, and whereas there are ongoing conflicts currently in the Shan, Kachin, and Rakhine states;

Whereas August 25, 2017, attacks on security posts in Burma by the military group Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army resulted in a brutal, systematic, and disproportionate reprisal by the Burmese military and security forces on Rohingya villages;

Whereas more than 624,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh since the Burmese military commenced its scorched-earth campaign, with the burning of villages and local monuments, and reports of widespread rape, starvation, killing, and forcible deportation;

Whereas Burmese military officials have promulgated fabrications about the Rohingya to sow negative public perception of the minority ethnic group, including that they are not Burmese, that they are uniformly implicated in terrorist activities and controlled by international terrorist groups with the intention of creating an Islamic State, that they attacked their own people and burned down their own villages in order to gain international sympathy, and that they are fleeing to Bangladesh for economic reasons or to create the appearance of ethnic cleansing;

Whereas the Government of Burma has consistently denied access to the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar established to investigate human rights violations around the country;

Whereas the Commander in Chief of the Burmese military, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, has made statements communicating his antipathy for the Rohingya people, including on March 27, 2017, where he reportedly said that "[t]he Bengalis in Rakhine state are not Myanmar citizens and they are just people who come and stay in the country," and on September 2, 2017, where he reportedly said that the ongoing military operations against the Rohingya were aimed at "unfinished business" from World War II;

Whereas a Human Rights Watch report entitled, "'All of My Body Was Pain': Sexual Violence Against Rohingya Women and Girls in Burma," documented the Burmese military's widespread acts of sexual violence against women and girls since August 25, 2017;

Whereas Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court includes murder, forced deportation, rape, and persecution among its definition of "crimes against humanity";

Whereas, on September 11, 2017, in his opening statement for the United Nations Human Rights Council's 36th session, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein reiterated his concern about the pattern of gross violation of human rights of the Rohingya in Burma, calling the persecution a "textbook case of ethnic cleansing";

Whereas, on October 23, 2017, the Department of State suspended travel waivers for Burmese military leaders, found that all Burmese military units and officers involved in operations in northern Rakhine State are ineligible for United States assistance programs, rescinded invitations for Burmese security leaders to travel to United States-sponsored programs, and pressed for access for the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar to hold responsible those who have committed violence against the Rohingya;

Whereas, on November 3, 2017, the international human rights organization Human Rights Watch called for the United Nations Security Council to refer Burma to the International Criminal Court in light of Burma's failure to investigate mass atrocities against the Rohingya;

Whereas, on November 6, 2017, the United Nations Security Council issued Presidential Statement SC/13055 calling on Burma to "end the excessive military force and intercommunal violence that had devastated the Rohingya community in Rakhine State" in Burma;

Whereas, on November 16, 2017, the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee approved draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.48 calling for an end to the abuse of human rights against the Rohingya by Burmese authorities, accountability for the perpetrators, and unrestricted access for United Nations investigators in Burma;

Whereas, on November 22, 2017, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson declared that the Burmese military's crackdown "constitutes ethnic cleansing against the Rohingyas";

Whereas, on November 28, 2017, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women called on Burma to report within six months on rapes and sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls by its security forces in northern Rakhine State and further to take measures to punish soldiers responsible for these acts;

Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Council held a Special Session on December 5, 2017, where it adopted a resolution strongly condemning the alleged systematic and gross violations of human rights and abuses committed against the Rohingya in Burma and requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to track the progress concerning the human rights situation of Rohingya people; and

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein recommended on December 5, 2017, the establishment of "a new impartial and independent mechanism, complementary to the work of the Fact-Finding Mission, to assist individual criminal investigations of those responsible": Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the adoption of the resolution (A/HRC/RES/S-27/1) on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Burma by the United nations Human Rights Council on December 5, 2017;

(2) condemns the Burmese military for its atrocities against the Rohingya, which constitute ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity;

(3) reaffirms the longstanding international prohibitions and norms against the use of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity in any circumstance and calls on the United Nations to pass resolutions condemning the human rights violations by Burmese security forces against the Rohingya;

(4) urges the Government of Burma to allow for full, unhindered humanitarian access to the affected areas, and to allow the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission to Myanmar to examine the human rights violations by military and security forces in Burma and others abuses, with a particular focus on the situation in Rakhine State;

(5) urges State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi to fully implement the Final Report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State;

(6) urges the Government of Burma to take immediate steps to close internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and the Rohingya ghetto at Aung Mingalar in Sittwe while respecting the rights and dignity of populations currently residing in these camps, and to further lift restrictions on freedom of movement of Rohingya living in villages throughout northern Rakhine State;

(7) calls on the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury to impose targeted sanctions and travel restrictions against senior leaders of the Burmese military implicated in atrocities, including its multiple holding companies and banks;

(8) urges the international community to assist with the economic development of the Rakhine State, one of the poorest states in Burma, in which poverty exacerbates tensions between ethnic groups;

(9) urges the Government of Burma to conduct a comprehensive and transparent investigation—with the support of a credible international third party—to examine abuses against the Rohingya and hold perpetrators accountable;

(10) urges the United Nations to establish an independent mechanism to assist individual criminal investigations of those responsible for atrocity crimes against the Rohingya and refer those responsible to the International Criminal Court;

(11) calls on the United Nations Security Council to impose a comprehensive arms embargo against Burma; and

(12) calls upon the nations of the world to revoke travel visas for Burmese Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and all other members of the Burmese military responsible for the ethnic cleansing campaign and crimes against humanity against the Rohingya.

## AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I have 12 request for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. in room SR–328A to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SH–216 to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 9:50 a.m. in room SD–406 to consider the nomination R. D. James, of Missouri, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Department of Defense.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD–406 to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission''.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Using Force: Strategic, Political, and Legal Considerations''.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 2:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Treaties''.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD–430 to conduct a hearing entitled ''Implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act: Responding to Mental Health Needs''.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, in room S–216 to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Johnny Collett, of Kentucky, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Mitchell Zais, of South Carolina, to be Deputy Secretary, and James Blew, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, all of the Department of Education, William Beach, of Kansas, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Kate S. O'Scannlain, of Maryland, to be Solicitor, and Scott A. Mugno, of Pennsylvania, and Preston Rutledge, of the District of Columbia, both to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of Labor, and other pending nominations.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD–226 to conduct a hearing on the following confirmation: Elizabeth L. Branch, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, R. Stan Baker, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Georgia, Charles Barnes Goodwin, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, Matthew J. Kacsmaryk, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Texas, Matthew Spencer Petersen, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, and Eli Jeremy Richardson, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

The Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Service is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

The Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SR–253 to conduct a hearing research, diagnosis, and treatment for traumatic brain injury/concussion in servicemembers.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ANTITRUST, COMPETITION POLICY AND CONSUMER RIGHTS

The Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 2 p.m. in room SD–226 to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Consumer Welfare Standard in Antitrust: Outdated or a Harbor in Sea of Doubt?''.

## PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Nima Binara, a detailee on my Judiciary Committee staff, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 115th Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my intern, Alisha Bi, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, December 14; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Ho nomination; finally, that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Ho nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of our Democratic colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Florida.

## DACA

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, Senator DURBIN has been leading a group of us talking about DACA, or the Dreamers. I wish to tell the Senate two stories.

I wish to tell you about Elisha Dawkins. He was a baby who was brought from the Bahamas at age 6 months. He grew up in America. He grew up in Jacksonville, FL. He never knew anything about his roots. He only knew that he was in America.

He served two tours in Iraq. He came back and joined the Navy Reserve. He had a top secret clearance and was sent to the very sensitive post of Guantanamo, where he was given a job as a photographer—obviously, a very sensitive position.

Through an application for a passport and checking on the background of the passport, it came to be learned that he had come to America as an infant, and for what reason—for the life of me, it has not been explained—he was arrested and thrown in jail by a U.S. attorney. Once this case came to the light of day and some of us started speaking out about it, a Federal district judge took it in her hands to lecture the U.S. attorney, and only because of that, Elisha Dawkins was released from jail.

As a result, we then started getting into it, and Elisha Dawkins was finally given his citizenship, and he is now serving in his native Jacksonville. He is a nurse.

Here is an individual who had served two tours in Iraq and was in a top secret clearance in the service to the

Navy Reserve in Guantanamo. This just shouldn't happen. Individuals in good faith have gone about carrying on—some not even knowing; and Elisha certainly didn't know of his undocumented status—but now we have many others. These individuals, in good faith, have divulged personal information to the Department of Homeland Security, which could eventually deport them, and that is why it is critical that we pass the Dream Act as soon as possible.

I have heard from DACA recipients from all around the country, but especially I have heard from a lot of the 30,000 who are in the State of Florida. I have heard from DACA recipients who are valedictorians, medical students, even priests. Many are the primary breadwinners for their families.

Senator DURBIN has already highlighted some of my constituents over the years, including Cristina Velasquez, a graduate of Miami Dade community college who will soon graduate from Georgetown University and fulfill her dream of becoming a teacher for Teach For America.

Cristina came to America at age 6 from Venezuela, a country whose problems Senator DURBIN and I, but also the Presiding Officer today, have consistently been concerned about—the plight of Venezuela.

If we fail to pass the Dream Act, are we saying that we are going to send Cristina back to the Maduro dictatorship in Venezuela, a dictatorship that can't even provide the basic staples for its citizens? Are we going to allow this young lady—who grew up thinking she was an American, now graduating from Georgetown—to channel her skills and her passion toward bettering our communities in need as a teacher? It doesn't make any sense to deport these kids.

The contributions that Dreamers have made are countless, and Cristina and Elisha are just two examples. These Dreamers will continue to better our communities if only we will pass the legislation that Senator DURBIN is sponsoring and many of us are cosponsoring.

Rhetorically—this was going to be a time of question and answers, but Senator DURBIN allowed me to kick off this session, and I see that we have many other Senators to speak.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Thank you, Mr. President, for the recognition.

Mr. President, the President of the United States terminated the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, otherwise known as DACA, 3 months ago. He gave Congress 6 months to act. We are no closer today to helping our Dreamers than the day the President so callously canceled the program.

We have almost 800,000 young people whose lives, dreams, and futures hang in the balance. They are scared. Their families are scared. Everything they have worked for is at risk.

Dreamers represent some of our very best and brightest. They are going to school, holding down jobs, volunteering in our communities. They want to be doctors, lawyers, engineers. They want to start businesses.

They came here as children, and they are American through and through. They love our country as much as any of us, and they want to stay and contribute.

We have almost 7,000 Dreamers in my home State of New Mexico. Carlos is one of them. Carlos was brought to New Mexico from Mexico when he was less than 1 year old. New Mexico is the only home Carlos has ever known.

Because of Carlos's immigration status, his opportunities were limited. He couldn't play sports in school, and he couldn't go on field trips, even though he pledged allegiance to the United States, just like his classmates.

Carlos registered with DACA 2 years ago, and in his words, he was given ''wings.'' He is now a full-time student at New Mexico State University, studying to be a mechanical engineer. He volunteers as a firefighter. He works as a server at a local restaurant, and he began a drive to help Hurricane Harvey victims.

Carlos says: ''We, as Dreamers, have proven ourselves to be worthy of being here in the United States.''

Carlos's story can be told hundreds of thousands of times over. Congress must act, and we must act now. We owe it to these young people. We must give Carlos and all other Dreamers their wings.

Passing the Dream Act is the morally right thing to do, but it is also the economically smart thing to do. Dreamers' contributions to the U.S. economy are astounding. Their jobs span the spectrum. They work in health, education, nonprofits, wholesale, retail, business, and hold professional jobs. Most of the top 25 Fortune 500 companies employ Dreamers, and that is why more than 400 CEOs of major U.S. companies have urged Congress to pass the Dream Act.

If Congress fails to act, it will cost us 700,000 jobs—as many as 30,000 jobs a month—causing chaos for employers, and we could see a $460 billion decrease in economic output over a decade. Social Security and Medicare contributions could drop by $39.3 billion over the same period.

In my State, New Mexico would lose nearly 6,000 DACA workers and take a $385 million hit. We simply cannot afford it.

We have a bipartisan Dream Act before us. Senator DURBIN is working with our Republican colleagues, Republican friends, to get us over the finish line. Let's do the right thing by these young people, and let's do it now so Carlos can become an engineer and so hundreds of thousands of Dreamers can stop living in fear and move forward with their lives. It is our moral obligation to do this.

We also must do right by the 11 million immigrants in our Nation who are working, raising families, contributing to our economy, and helping in our communities. Congress must stop kicking the can down the road. We must do our job. We must debate and pass comprehensive immigration reform. Law-abiding immigrants who are contributing to our Nation should be given a pathway to citizenship.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on September 5 of this year, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the repeal of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as DACA. That same day, President Trump called on Congress to come up with a solution to legalize DACA.

He challenged us; he said to the Senate, and he said to the House: I am going to eliminate this Executive order of President Obama. Now it is your turn. Pass a law if you want to protect 780,000 young people who had signed up under DACA.

DACA was the direct result of the DREAM Act, which I introduced 16 years ago, to try to protect young people who came to the United States, brought here by their parents at an early age, who grew up here and don't have a future. They don't have a home. They don't have a legal status. They don't have a country to call their own.

It strikes me that these young people themselves did nothing wrong. I can even argue that their parents did what every parent would do—the best thing they could for their kids. But in this situation, trying to focus on what their future will be, their future is clearly in doubt, and right now many of them are worried about what is going to happen next.

You see, without the protection of DACA, they can be deported. They are undocumented. They can't legally work in the United States, and many of them have wondered whether they should continue school or what they will do when they can't go to work. These are real-life challenges, and many times they break down emotionally as they talk about the uncertainty of their future.

Just outside this Capitol is a beautiful Mall, and smack dab in the middle of it are two white tents. They are tents that have been built by these young Dreamers in an effort to process hundreds of people, just like themselves, who are coming to Washington to tell their stories to Senators and Congressmen in the hopes that we will do something.

There are some in the Senate who don't want to help them at all. They

don't believe they should receive any help in any way whatsoever. There are others who say: Let's put it off. Let's do it sometime, maybe next year. Next year is coming soon, and under the President's decision, on March 5 of 2018—just a few weeks from now—there will be no DACA protection whatsoever.

It means that today, 122 a day of these DACA-protected young people will fall out of protected status. March 5 of next year, the number goes to 1,000 a day—1,000 a day—who will be subject to deportation, uncertain about what their future might be.

I think it is time for us to do something, and I hope that we can do it on a bipartisan basis and do it in a timely fashion. It is important that we fix our entire immigration system, but let's not try to do everything that needs to be done on immigration when we should be taking care of these young people as our highest and first priority.

I am ready to sign up for immigration reform. I was there before. It was called the Gang of 8—four Democrats and four Republicans. A few years ago, we came up with a comprehensive bill to pass the Senate. The Republicans in the House refused to even call for a hearing, let alone a vote on the floor.

We should do our part to pass the new DACA, the new Dream Act. Do it before we leave this year. Do it this year so that we can spare these young people the anxiety and stress and fear they have because of the current situation and so that we can meet President Trump's challenge.

I didn't like the fact that he eliminated DACA, but it is fair for him to say to us: You have 6 months, Congress. Now do something.

I am not in control here. I am in the minority, being a Democrat. It is up to Republican leaders here.

All I hear from Republican leaders is: Let's wait until next year and see if we have time to get around to this. We have the time, all the time we need now, to do this.

I want to thank a number of people. First, I want to thank the 34 Republican House Members who, last week, sent a letter to the Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN, saying that we should fix the DACA system before we leave this year. Thank you to those 34 Republicans.

In this Chamber, I want to thank 6 or 10 Republican Senators who have either cosponsored the Dream Act or are now actively engaged in helping to rewrite its replacement in the Senate. I am sure this kind of bipartisanship is a surprise to those who follow Congress, but it is an indication that many people share my belief that it is a simple matter of justice to give these young people their chance to become part of America's future.

I started a few years ago, when the Dreamers worked up the courage to declare publicly that they were undocumented—frightening their parents but giving them some unity and identity in America. I started coming to the floor when they sent me their color photos and telling their stories because there is no speech I could give that matches the stories of their lives. Each time I tell a story, I know it makes a difference. I know the people who are watching this on C–SPAN and those who are in the Galleries here in the Senate pay close attention because we are talking about real lives and real people.

Tonight I want to tell you about Carla Martinez. Carla Martinez was brought to the United States from Mexico at the age of 8. She grew up in the Austin and Pflugerville area of Texas, and she was an excellent student. In middle school and high school, she enrolled in advanced placement and community college courses, and she was recognized as an AP scholar student. In high school, she participated in the band, and she worked and volunteered in her community. During her senior year, Carla would go to school from 9 a.m. until 2:30 in the afternoon, then she would work from 3 in the afternoon until 11 at night and only then start her homework.

In August 2012, Carla began her studies at the University of Texas, San Antonio, obtaining a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. A student like Carla, who is undocumented, did not qualify for Federal Government assistance. It meant there was no Pell grant to help her pay for college or a Federal loan to help her pay for college. She had to work to earn the money to pay her way through school. Something which many people would shrink away from, she accepted the reality of being undocumented in America. Because she was ineligible for financial aid, she worked to support herself, and she often had to choose between food and buying books.

During college, Carla was also an officer in a number of organizations, including the Society of Women Engineers. She was a College of Engineering Ambassador, which means she had to maintain a very high GPA at the University of Texas. During her summers, Carla interned at Alpha Testing and the San Antonio Water System while she also worked as an engineering camp counselor.

In August of 2016, Carla was the first DACA recipient to study abroad with the University of Texas at San Antonio's Education Abroad Program. She studied in as part of the first group of students to participate in the Urbino, Italy, civil engineering program.

Because she couldn't get financial aid, studying abroad was more difficult for her than the other students who were part of the program. Not only did she need the money to go to college, she needed to raise the money to pay for the study abroad. She never gave up.

One of her professors said:

> Carla is a very dedicated student. She has excellent organizational skills and works well with her classmates. She is a team player. Her involvement with the College is fantastic—she has been an ambassador.

In May 2017, Carla graduated from the University of Texas at San Antonio with a civil engineering degree and two job offers. Today she works full-time at M&S Engineering as a water/wastewater engineer.

Her dreams for the future are to go back to school and get a master's in business and engineering and to give back by creating a scholarship program to help fund other engineering students.

Carla wrote me a letter about her worries because of President Trump's decision to take away her protection from being deported from the United States. Here is what she said: ''Every day that passes, it's a day closer to not being able to work, not having a driver's license, and not being able to financially provide for my family as the head of the household.''

People like Carla are the reason more than 400 business leaders signed a letter to all Members of Congress urging us to do something and pass a bipartisan Dream Act. The letter says:

> Dreamers are vital to the future of our companies and our economy. With them, we grow and create jobs. They are part of why we continue to have a global competitive advantage.

That gathering of Dreamers out on the Mall, just away from the Capitol dome here, are a lot of young people just like Carla. They are coming here in the hopes that Members of Congress will slow down in the hallways on the way to their office or to a committee hearing and just hear for a moment their stories—stories just like Carla's—stories that really beg us to do something. We know we have to, we know we should, and there is absolutely no reason to delay it.

Why would we want this amazing young woman, who has done so many extraordinary things in her life, to live with this uncertainty 1 minute more than she has to? Why wouldn't we step up and do what we are supposed to do?

I am working on this with colleagues. A number of Republican Senators have been sitting down in my office, even today, trying to work out the details on a compromise. We are not quite there, but there was a determination in our meeting today to get there, to put something together.

I would like to do this before we leave for the holidays. I think it is only right that we try our very best to achieve that, and I think we can. I think if Members of both sides show good faith, we can reach that goal.

I want to especially thank LINDSEY GRAHAM, my cosponsor of the Dream Act, and JEFF FLAKE of Arizona, another cosponsor, who have stepped up and really just shown extraordinary commitment to this cause. We also have LISA MURKOWSKI and CORY GARDNER as well who are cosponsors of the same legislation, and there are other Senators who are working with us behind the scenes to get this done. Some

of them I know are taking a political risk to do it, but they believe it is the right thing to do, and they want to be on the record to be part of the solution. I am looking forward to working with them.

In a few weeks—maybe only 10 days now—Congress is going to adjourn to go home for the holidays, but Dreamers can't go home for the holidays because they really don't have a home. They are homeless in America because they are waiting on us to come up with the legislation that defines their status and gives them a future. Hundreds of thousands of Dreamers can't enjoy the holidays the way many of us can because of their concern about being deported from the United States of America, separated from parents, brothers and sisters, friends, family, and loved ones.

When we introduced the Dream Act, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, a Republican from South Carolina, said: ''The moment of reckoning is coming.'' Well, that moment is here. Congress has the responsibility to do our job to make the Dream Act the law of the land before the end of this year or bear the responsibility for forcing hundreds of thousands of talented young immigrants out of the workforce and putting them at risk of immediate deportation.

The question we face is very basic, Will the United States of America be a better nation if Carla is forced to leave? This woman's determination, her drive, and her talent have brought her to this glorious moment when she finally graduated college. With this degree and with this education, she can offer us so much more and really serve America and its future.

This is the country she loves. She deserves the respect of this country, and she deserves the determination of the Members of the Senate to take this up as a highest priority in the closing days of this Senate session.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Illinois.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Illinois for all the work he does on behalf of Dreamers throughout the country. His leadership in this effort is absolutely inspiring.

I am here to speak out in favor of passing a clean Dream Act to create a pathway to citizenship for young immigrants who enrich our country and strengthen our economy and national security. The passage of the Dream Act is critical to the thousands of Dreamers living in Illinois.

I want to share one young woman's story. This is Christian Villalobos. Christian traveled from Mexico with her mother and younger sister because her mother was fleeing an abusive marriage. At only 6 years old, Christian was brought to the United States not knowing a word of English. She needed to adapt quickly to her new home.

Christian worked hard in school to learn English and made great efforts to excel in all of her academic subjects. Then, when she was in the third grade, she was diagnosed with a learning disability, which might have caused her to become frustrated and to see a decline in her grades. However, in her own words, she said:

> I didn't let that get in the way and I did not let bad influences in my neighborhood get to me. There, in the back of my head, there was always a little voice saying, ''Education is the way to a better life.''

Christian pushed through and finished middle school and high school as an honor student and, despite her constant hard work and proven academic record, she faced an unexpected obstacle—adults in her life who doubted her ability to attain a college education. As she tells it, many adults in her life simply assumed that an undocumented student like Christian could not obtain a college education. While these doubts broke her heart, she was not deterred.

Christian's hard work, grit, and academic merit all earned her admission to Northern Illinois University where she received a private scholarship. She also worked multiple retail jobs selling flowers, shoes, and clothing to fund her education. Although her future was uncertain, Christian never let up on her academics or her many work responsibilities to put herself through school.

Finally, in the last few years of her college education, she received some relief with the implementation of the DACA Program. In 2015, she became the first person in her family to graduate with a bachelor's degree.

She had a job offer right after graduation which, as anyone can tell you, is not an easy feat. Although her DACA work permit expired that summer, when she had intended to start working full-time, her company was so invested in having her come on board that they worked with Christian to ensure that her DACA work permit was renewed. Their investment was worthwhile. Within the first 2 years at her company, Christian reached No. 1 in sales nationwide. She is now a branch manager of her company and consistently one of the top performers in sales.

Christian also opened doors for other DACA recipients who have joined her at her company and are also excelling in their roles. She is just one of thousands of Dreamers who positively contribute to our Nation.

It is evident that our businesses and communities benefit and thrive from the work ethic and the perseverance Dreamers like Christian possess. There are no truer American values than to work hard, accomplish your goals, and to have the ability to fully contribute to society.

Unfortunately, due to the Trump administration's elimination of DACA, nearly 800,000 of our young people like Christian are now vulnerable to deportation. Thousands of young people who participated in the DACA Program and who are legally in the United States may no longer be able to serve as doctors, teachers, students, and, yes, even servicemembers in our military. This decision will also tear families and communities apart.

I implore my colleagues in the Senate to recognize the contributions of our DACA recipients throughout the country. I urge my colleagues to not shortchange the thousands of Dreamers who learn and work alongside our families and friends. We must do everything we can to make sure the Dream Act is addressed before the holidays.

I will not turn my back on Dreamers like Christian, and I will fight to protect DACA recipients as we work to make the Dream Act the law of the land.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in expressing my support for taking action on the Dream Act, as well as to express my continued opposition to the administration's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

I thank my colleague Senator DURBIN for organizing today's remarks, as well as for his years of leadership and tireless advocacy on behalf of the Dreamers, along with Senator GRAHAM, who is leading this very important bill with Senator DURBIN.

It is critically important that the Senate pass the Dream Act and not wait any longer to take action. There are 22,000 eligible DACA recipients who did not meet the administration's deadline to renew their statuses, and as a result, about 122 Dreamers are now losing their DACA statuses every day. That is more than 11,000 who have already lost their statuses as of today, and that number will continue to increase every single day that we fail to act. This is nothing on which we can wait—wait a week, wait 1 month, wait 2 months. Every single day, it affects more people. So, while some have suggested that we wait until March to fix this issue, the reality is that the Senate needs to take action now.

Since it was first established in 2012, DACA has helped nearly 800,000 young people who have lived since childhood in the United States to better contribute to their families and communities, including more than 6,000 who are in my State. I recently met with the archbishop of the Twin Cities, along with some of these Dreamers, and we talked about how important this was to the fabric of life in our

community, to our economy in Minnesota—where we have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country—to the Dreamers, and to their communities, themselves.

The Dreamers were brought to our country as children, and they know only one home. That is the United States of America. The average Dreamer has called this country home since he was about 6½ years old. That is the average. Dreamers serve in our military; they pay taxes; and they contribute to communities across our country. More than 97 percent of Dreamers are now in school or in the workforce—97 percent—and all DACA recipients are required to meet the program's education requirements. In fact, 72 percent of all DACA recipients who are currently in school are pursuing bachelor's degrees or higher. According to the American Association of Medical Colleges, more than 100 students with DACA status applied to medical school last year. This is at a time when we have a shortage of doctors in my State, particularly in the rural areas.

The administration's decision to end DACA has created tremendous uncertainty and the risk of deportation for the Dreamers who work and study in the States across our Nation. It, simply, doesn't make economic sense. One recent study estimated that ending this policy would cost the country over $400 billion over the next 10 years.

I would like to point out to my colleagues that for immigrants as a whole, 25 percent of our U.S. Nobel laureates were born in other countries and that 70 of our Fortune 500 companies are headed up by immigrants. Why would we cut off this talent flow? Look at these DACA recipients. Ninety-seven percent of the Dreamers are working or are in school.

That is why I strongly disagree with the President's decision to end DACA, as do many Republicans, Democrats, business, labor, and religious leaders, and it is why I support the bipartisan Durbin-Graham Dream Act. America is truly a country built by immigrants, but just as importantly, these immigrants and their families have helped America succeed. They have been part of our Nation's greatest achievements.

I look at my own family.

On my dad's side, my great-grandparents came from Slovenia. My great-grandfather worked in the mine, and my grandpa worked in the mine because they needed people to mine iron ore in order to make all of the armaments and all of the ships that helped us to win World War II. That happened. They were so proud of what they had done to contribute to our country's efforts.

On my mom's side, my actual grandparents, who were Swiss, came to this country—my grandma as a 3-year-old, to Wisconsin, with her parents.

My grandpa, when he was about 18 years old, came over. He found out that there was a limit on Swiss immigrants. He somehow got through Canada and then got through to Wisconsin. He met my grandma and had my mom and her brother, my Uncle Dick, and, at some point, decided that he would try to change his status from ''alien'' to ''legal immigrant.'' That was when the Congress had just passed the Alien Registration Act. Because World War II was before us, he had to register. That went smoothly, so he decided to apply for citizenship. That was when they discovered that he had entered the country twice—once when he had said that he was going to Canada, on Ellis Island—but he went to Canada only for a week—and the second time when he had gotten through to Wisconsin.

I don't know what would have happened to my grandpa now. Back then, he went through the immigration hearing; he got his status. There is a picture of him in his bow tie—in an old black and white—and he is smiling. He was much older than when he had come to our country and become a citizen. I don't know what would have happened, because what he had done wasn't really legal.

Back then, they said: Do you know what? We want you in our country. You are a worker. You have raised two kids. You live in Milwaukee. We want you to be a citizen. They gave him that citizenship just a few weeks before the United States entered World War II. Otherwise, I guess he would have been deported to Switzerland right in the middle of the war.

That is my story, and everyone has an immigrant story.

The Senate-passed bill, when we did comprehensive reform—and I was one of the people very involved in that on the Judiciary Committee—included a version of the DREAM Act, which would have created a path to citizenship for those eligible for DACA who had graduated from high school and gone on to complete higher education or to serve in the military. We must end this uncertainty for Dreamers. That is why I have joined with so many of my colleagues in calling on Leader MCCONNELL to hold a vote.

Here is a Dreamer whom I will never forget. I was trying to find examples for people in my State so that they may understand what this ''Dreamer'' term is all about, and I found one a few years ago—Joseph Medina. At the time, he was 99 years old, and he was a decorated Army veteran. We lost him only last month at age 103. He told me his story back when he was 99.

He was brought to our country from Mexico when he was 5 years old. He had no idea that he was not born in our country. He grew up in Sleepy Eye, MN. Then he signed up to serve in World War II. That was when they had found out that he was, in fact, undocumented and had not been born in our country. Back then, as he had described it to me, the military had wanted people to serve, so they had him go to Canada. At the direction of our military, he went to Canada for 1 night, stayed—his words—in a nice hotel and then came back to Minnesota, and—magic—he was legal. He served under General MacArthur in the Pacific. He then came back to the United States, met his wife, got married, and had kids. His son served in the Vietnam war.

I had the privilege of hosting him at the World War II Memorial, which he had never seen before—with his son, who is a Vietnam vet—so that he could see the memorial for the first and the last time. With us were two Dreamers from high schools in the suburban Twin Cities area who wanted to serve in the Air Force but couldn't because we don't have the same rules we had during World War II. It was, basically, because of their statuses that they couldn't serve.

We lost Joseph Medina—the advocate that he was not only in words but by example—just last month. I think of his service, and when I see him standing in front of that memorial with those two Dreamers who weren't themselves allowed to serve, it really hits home to me and to everyone who has heard his story as to what these Dreamers are all about.

We all have our stories, and we owe it to these Dreamers and we owe it to our country and the values of our country to stand up for these Dreamers. I stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have spoken out in support of the Dream Act and who agree that we must take action in the Senate to protect these Dreamers in the name of Joseph Medina and in the name of all of our relatives who have always come from somewhere. Let's get this done.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## WALL STREET AND WORKERS' WAGES

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, this month, this body has spent much of its time pushing a tax bill that rewards corporations that ship jobs overseas while doing nothing for hard-working families. It has spent time cutting taxes on the wealthiest people in the country—cutting taxes for corporations that ship jobs overseas and giving them more incentives to do it by the way they have actually constructed the bill and rewarding their largest billionaire contributors. At the same time, they have ignored the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Letters are going out to families. There are 200,000 children in my State who are enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program. Parents in many States are getting letters from

the government that read: Sorry, your insurance is going away. Because of the inaction of this body—of Senators and House Members who have insurance provided for by taxpayers—we are not doing our jobs. We get insurance paid for by taxpayers while 200,000 children in Ohio and 60,000, 70,000, 80,000, 90,000, 100,000 families are going to lose theirs. That is it.

We are giving tax cuts to the richest people in the country and tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas instead of fixing the healthcare law, instead of doing the Children's Health Insurance Program—instead of doing infrastructure, instead of doing the things that we should be doing. Forget about what we are not doing to serve the public; the priorities reflected in this tax bill are completely backward, which has become pretty standard in this Congress.

Time and again, our economy, our leaders, our politics reward Wall Street, not just instead of workers; we reward Wall Street at the expense of workers. The people of Ohio and people around the country are working harder than ever and working longer than ever, but they have less and less to show for it.

Imagine this: 44 percent of Americans who have an emergency—that would be four out of nine Americans—cannot afford that emergency expense of $400. Four out of every nine Americans cannot come up with $400 to pay for an emergency, but Wall Street is doing just fine. It is getting richer. So what do we do? We give more tax cuts and more tax breaks to corporations that outsource jobs, and we give more help in the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee for some of the most profitable banks in America. Yet we can't do anything for workers, and we can't do anything for families.

The wealth held on Wall Street has gone up. Corporate profits have gone up. CEO salaries have gone up. CEO salaries are 271 times greater than workers' pay. For a worker who makes $20,000—I almost can't even do the math—it is 271 times that. Imagine that. For every $1 a worker makes in the country, the average CEO makes $271. How much do they need? Do you know what the answer to that is? Let's give tax cuts to the people making $271 and maybe a few crumbs for the workers making $1. Is that fair?

Over the next few months, I am going to lay out the case for how Wall Street undermines American workers and lay out some of the changes that we need to make in this country to grow our middle class and make hard work pay off. Each installment of this series, which we are calling Wall Street's War on Workers, will be posted on my medium page. You can follow along at www.medium.com/@SenatorBrown.

Today, I want to talk about workers' paychecks. It is pretty simple. It is really simple. Wall Street doesn't want you to get a raise. It doesn't sound plausible. You heard that right. Wall Street doesn't want you to get a raise. Let me explain. Wall Street tries to convince us that when the stock market does well, the economy does well and vice versa.

Well, look around. Visit the town where I grew up, Mansfield. Visit Chillicothe, visit Dover, New Philly, visit Lima, Middletown or Hamilton. Visit a community in my State that was once a proud industrial town that has been hit by globalization. Talk to the workers.

Stock prices are still going up. Yes, they are, and the President of the United States likes to take credit for that as if that is the only story. Talk to workers who haven't had a meaningful raise in years. Talk to workers who have seen their retirement cut. Talk to workers who have watched their healthcare premiums rise. Talk to workers who have seen the cost of childcare and saving for their kids' college and paying off their student loans go up and up and up. That is what happened.

For most Americans, the idea that a stock market rally means more money in their pocket is laughable. That is why, when the President—even today, when he was talking about this tax cut, he was promising that we are doing all these tax cuts for middle-class Americans. Well, if you want to give tax cuts to middle-class Americans, give tax cuts to middle-class Americans. Don't cut taxes on corporations, cutting them 43 percent—that is what the bill does—if they would let us read it. The last time I read it, that is what it said. They cut the corporate tax rate by 43 percent. They say that money will trickle down, you will get a raise, there will be more jobs. It has never really worked that way. It didn't work in North Carolina that way. It hasn't worked in Ohio that way. It simply doesn't happen.

The President stands there and says: We are going to give the best tax cuts for Christmas you ever saw. He brags about the stock market going up. One of the reasons two-thirds of Americans don't much like this President is because they heard him brag about the stock market and how great that is, but there is nothing in their own pockets when he does that. The money is not trickling down. Workers aren't seeing a $4,000 raise. Nobody really believes that.

The White House made up some phony study that said all this money is going to workers' pockets. It never works that way. It didn't work that way when President Bush—in 2001, 2003, President Bush did a big tax cut bill. Let me give you one statistic about that tax cut bill in 2001 and 2003, those two bills. In that tax cut bill, 27 percent of the benefits went to the richest 1 percent—27 percent.

The pages are pretty good in math because they are still taking math class—27 percent of the benefits of that tax bill went to the richest 1 percent. That sounds pretty outrageous, because the richest 1 percent didn't really need it. Now, in this tax bill, 62 percent of the benefits in this tax bill go to the richest 1 percent—62 percent of the benefits in this tax bill go to the 1 percent. Why is that? Well, one reason is that a number of Members of Congress have said this. When they go across the street to Republican headquarters to make their fundraising calls, their contributors say: Don't call me back for campaign money until you give me and my friends a tax cut.

Get that. Don't call me for campaign money until you go back across the street and give me and my rich friends a tax cut. How corrupt is that? How awful is that? How unfeeling is that? How counterproductive is that for our economy?

The data backs that up. Workers' share of income has fallen over the last four decades. Wage inequality has risen, especially at the largest companies. Some may argue that workers who have retirement accounts share in the benefits when the stock market does well. Only 50 percent of private sector workers have these types of accounts at all, and they use them to make long-term investments for their retirement. The short-term profits that drive so much of corporate decision making have little effect on accounts workers will not touch for several decades. Just because workers have retirement accounts doesn't mean they are able to save. In fact, 70 percent of Americans have less than $1,000 in retirement savings.

Remember I said four out of nine or 44 percent of Americans couldn't come up with $400 in emergency spending for a trip to the dentist or $400 to fix a car? Four out of nine Americans couldn't come up with that. Well, it is even worse because 70 percent of Americans have less than $1,000 in retirement savings. Do you know why they have less than $1,000 in retirement savings? Because their wages haven't gone up for a decade or so.

The fact is, a paycheck is how most workers pay their bills every month and put food on the table each night. Wall Street has a lot to say about how much should be in that paycheck.

Remember, at the beginning of this speech, I stated that Wall Street doesn't want you to get a raise. Some of my colleagues—particularly those who get a lot of money from Wall Street and think Wall Street should run the country even more than they do—but when I said Wall Street doesn't want people to have a raise, here is how that works.

Last month, Bank of America downgraded Chipotle's stock because an analyst decided the company employees were working too many hours and getting paid too much. Wall Street downgraded their stock because the analyst said their workers were making too much.

Do you remember what happened when American Airlines gave their employees a raise? They were punished in

the stock exchange. They were getting paid too much. The banks decided that Chipotle employees worked too many hours and earned too much money. The stock declined by 3 percent. It didn't matter that they were profitable, employees were happy. It didn't matter that their employees were productive. It didn't matter that they were a good company. Their stock price went down because the analyst said they were paying their workers too much. Some of you have been to Chipotle. I am guessing their workers are not making $100,000 a year. I guess they are making $10, $12 an hour.

I went to my high school reunion a couple of years ago. I sat across from a woman who worked at a major national bank, a well-known bank. I don't need to cite the name. When I worked at my family farm growing up, I used to put my $120-every-2-week paycheck in that bank. It has been sold several times and is now part of a major Wall Street bank. She has worked there 30 years. She has been a teller in that bank for 30 years. She makes $30,000 a year. She has 30 years of service in this bank and makes $30,000 a year. Do you want me to list what the top management of that bank makes? Tens of millions of dollars in compensation, stock options, and stock buybacks, huge dividends because they own so much of the bank. This woman makes $30,000 a year. What is right about an economy like that?

The entry level wage at Chipotle is between $9 and $10 an hour. It is typical for fast food. It is clearly not enough to lift a family of three out of poverty. So Chipotle wanted to give raises to their workers, and Wall Street slapped them for doing it. Wall Street's attacks on workers' wages have not been limited to Chipotle.

I mentioned American Airlines. They announced pay raises for their pilots and flight attendants earlier this year. Wall Street punished the company, dropping its stock by 5 percent.

Citibank, one of the Wall Street firms we sometimes talk about, is a $2 trillion bank—somewhere close to that. I may be wrong about that, but there are six banks in the country whose assets are over $1 trillion, as high as—I think JPMorgan Chase is higher. Citibank analysts actually wrote this about American Airlines:

> This is frustrating. Labor is being paid first again. Shareholders get leftovers.

Think of that. So they gave their workers, their pilots—I assume the Senator from North Carolina and Leigh and all the people at the desk there—I think that probably you want airline pilots to be paid pretty well. I think you do. Flight attendants make all the flying we do a little bit easier. This company wanted to pay them more and Wall Street says:

> This is frustrating. Labor is being paid first again. Shareholders get leftovers.

Really? Think about this. Companies are more profitable, CEOs are getting paid more and more, and executive compensation is up, stock prices are up, and workers are getting paid less. Then, when they want to pay the flight attendants and the pilots a little more, they complain because labor is being paid first again. Never mind that the labor in question simply pushed to get paid the same as their counterparts at United and Delta. Think about that.

American Airlines decided they should pay their workers who do roughly the same job the same as United and Delta. They thought that would be a good thing for competition reasons, for hiring workers, and maybe even for Wall Street. Wall Street said: No, really, we don't want that to happen.

I wonder how much that analyst at Citibank is paid. Some of you would call that class warfare, but I would call it an interesting fact if I knew what it was, but imagine the nerve of saying that shareholders get the leftovers. When is the last time Wall Street got the leftovers?

By ''labor,'' what we are talking about is people who create wealth for the company. It is the workers who create wealth. Management is important, of course, setting the direction of the company and doing all that management does in most corporations and does well, but rank-and-file workers—whether it is the woman who cleans the floor or the food service people in the basement, or whether it is the data entry person or whether it is the mid-level management person, whether it is the sales force, whether it is the CFO, workers create wealth for their companies, and shouldn't they share in some of that wealth? Don't you think pilots provide a lot of productivity and wealth to that company?

A JPMorgan analyst described the raises to the American Airlines pilots a different way. He said it is a ''wealth transfer of nearly $1 billion to its labor groups.'' Think about that.

One of the things that amuses me—except it bothers me more—whenever we talk about a wage increase, do you know what companies always say? They say: If we raise the minimum wage for these $7 or $8 or $9 workers, we are going to have to raise prices and lay people off, but they never say that when a top management employee gets a $1 million raise. You only have to lay people off and raise the price of the product if you raise the minimum wage, but if you give somebody a six- or seven-figure bonus, you don't have to worry, that is not going to cause anything. That is how phony these arguments are that they make and frankly how revolting these arguments are.

Wall Street didn't call it a wealth transfer of $1 billion to its labor group. Wall Street didn't call it a wealth transfer when the CEO of JPMorgan got a 4-percent raise and was paid—anybody want to guess? Do any of the pages want to guess? Does any of the staff want to guess? Their CEO is paid $28 million a year, but that happens to be the same company where the woman I sat across from at a high school reunion makes $30,000 a year after 30 years of service. I don't wish him any ill will, certainly, for the $28 million he makes. The people who work directly with the public, who have to listen directly to the complaints, who have to spend money coming to work and wearing nice clothes because they are a bank teller, making $30,000 a year? What is fair about that? None of the banks complained about that being a wealth transfer.

Remember that line, a wealth transfer of $1 billion to its labor group? None of the banks complained about a wealth transfer when Wells Fargo CEO John Stumpf was allowed to retire with tens of millions of dollars in compensation after overseeing a massive scandal that caused the bank's stock to tank.

Do you know what I hear in the Banking Committee from time to time? These CEOs, if their company has cheated people, their company has made a huge mistake that caused problems for the company, they often come in and say: You know, we are sorry—we are kind of sorry—and we are going to give up our bonus. They say they are going to give up their bonus. They are already making $8 or $10 or $12 or $15 million. Now they are going to give up their bonus. How generous of them.

If paying employees is a wealth transfer, as the JPMorgan analyst said, but CEO bonuses are not a wealth transfer, it raises the question: Who exactly does Wall Street think the wealth belongs to? Who does it think is creating the wealth for these companies? Companies can't be profitable without the workers. Wall Street seems to think the whole cake belongs to the CEOs and stockholders while workers only deserve crumbs.

It has not always been like this.

In the past, banks actually invested in businesses and the workers on Main Street, but the corporate business models have changed. According to a recent analysis, only 15 percent of Wall Street funds are invested in businesses, down from the majority of funds several decades ago. Instead of investing in real businesses, in real towns that create real jobs and build real communities, they spend billions buying back stock and handing out CEO bonuses. This change has worked out pretty well for Wall Street.

Even though Wall Street has 4 percent of all U.S. jobs, it accounts for 25 percent of all corporate profits. Pretty good, huh? It is not for that teller who works at the bank in Mansfield, OH, but for the stockholders and the CEO. As anyone can tell you, it hasn't worked out that well for most people.

CEOs are evaluated on the quarterly performance of their company's stock. They are compensated, in large part, with company shares, but most Americans don't think in terms of 3-month earnings quarters. They think in terms of school years, they think in terms of 30-year mortgages, and they think in

terms of how many years before I retire and how much money do I have to save to be able to.

Main Street investors and workers only make a profit when a company's stock market value continues to rise over time. Wall Street and Main Street's interests no longer match up. That is the problem with our economy today. Wall Street's interest are not the same as Main Street's interests. Wall Street does well, Wall Street gets bigger and bigger compensation, and workers see their wages stagnate. Folks in the corporate boardroom are not forced to consider what is in the long-term interest of workers, what is in the long-term interest of small-time investors, what is in the long-term interest of the communities that have helped them grow and made them rich. For them, workers are nothing more than a line item in a budget that ought to be minimized. It is why they have no problem taking pay out of the pockets of workers—pay that would otherwise drive innovation and productivity—all to boost short-term profits for CEOs and speculators.

When you get short-term profits, you are going to get more money in your bonus, you are going to get more money in your stock buybacks, and you are going to get more money in your executive compensation. All of it is set up and all of it is aimed at helping top management and top stockholders enrich themselves. It is not giving back to the community, not creating workers' wealth, and not investing in the future. It is all about short-term profits because that means huge compensation for the CEOs of America. Nothing in their business model forces these executives to view the workers making burritos at Chipotle as real people with real families.

I will go back to that. Chipotle did the right thing, and they gave raises to their employees. American Airlines did the right thing, and they gave raises to their employees. But the stock market, Wall Street crushed them for it, and that is what has to change.

Until the banks and Wall Street respect a hard day's work and understand that work must have a value for the economy to grow, we will continue to see the consequences. The gap between Wall Street and Main Street will keep growing. Workers' wages will decline. Our middle class will shrink. Wall Street executives and CEOs will get bigger and bigger bonuses.

We will continue here to give tax cuts to the richest people in the country, and our economy and our economic growth will continue to lag. The rich get richer and the middle class shrinks. That is the formula. The rich get richer and the middle class shrinks. Haven't we had enough of that? Why should we still be doing that?

I yield the floor.

## ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:02 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, December 14, 2017, at 10 a.m.

## CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate December 13, 2017:

THE JUDICIARY

DON R. WILLETT, OF TEXAS, TO BE A CIRCUIT JUDGE, UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT.

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## HONORING METRA CEO DON ORSENO ON HIS RETIREMENT

### HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Don Orseno on the occasion of his retirement from Metra, Northeast Illinois's commuter rail agency. Don's retirement is well-deserved after 4 years leading the agency and 44 years in the railroad industry.

Don began his railroading career in 1974 when he was hired by the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company as a commuter train ticket taker, later working his way up to become a locomotive engineer. These experiences gave Don the applied knowledge that helped propel him to the top spot at one of the nation's premier commuter railroads. After joining Metra in 1984, Don continued his upward trajectory by advancing to Deputy Executive Director before his appointment as CEO/Executive Director in 2013 and confirmation in 2014.

Don's leadership at Metra could not have come at a more critical point in the agency's history, as he faced an uphill battle in tackling the many issues with Metra's operational performance and overall health. Leading a $1 billion commuter rail agency that runs 750 trains per day across a 3700-square mile, six-county region is a challenge under normal circumstances, but Don quickly showed he was the right fit for the job. Under Don's tenure, Metra has pursued ambitious modernization efforts while dealing with political uncertainties and complex regulatory mandates. Don's recent successes at Metra include improving on-time performance, expanding train car rehabilitation programs, modernizing the ticketing and fare system, and beginning the installation of wireless internet on Metra trains.

Don is not just an excellent leader and seasoned railroader, but he is also a great person and those of us who have worked with him or have come to know him are fortunate for that opportunity. Metra is a better place because of Don and he will be missed as he starts a new chapter to spend more time with his wife, Charm, two children, and five grandchildren.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Don Orseno for his many years of service to Chicagoland commuters and wishing him well in his retirement.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN SOLDIER ARMY SERGEANT (SGT) ADRIAN NOE OROSCO

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Sergeant (SGT) Adrian Noe Orosco who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on December 9, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. SGT Orosco was killed when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated near his dismounted position during combat operations in Baghdad, Iraq. SGT Orosco was assigned to the 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Irwin, California.

Elizabeth Orosco, SGT Orosco's wife, paid tribute to her husband on a memorial website. ''He was a wonderful father and a beautiful person,'' Mrs. Orosco wrote. ''He was the love of my life and I had ten beautiful years with him. I love him. I miss him and he's not forgotten.'' Sergeant (SGT) Reynaldo Salazar served with SGT Orosco. He also paid tribute to SGT Orosco on a memorial website. ''I met Adrian at Fort Irwin, California,'' SGT Salazar wrote. ''He was a great soldier and foremost a father, husband, and friend. I will never forget you, brother, and I will always remember you.'' Janey Medina, SGT Orosco's aunt, also wrote a tribute on a memorial website ''I know in my heart Adrian is in heaven today, watching over all of the rest of the family left behind,'' Ms. Medina wrote. ''I truly grieve and miss him very much. He came to visit me before he left to serve in the war. I felt it was something he truly wanted to do in his life. He was proud of his career in the Army. I loved Adrian. I loved him like a son.''

According to the Associated Press, SGT Orosco, a native of Corcoran, California, played football and was a member of the band. He graduated from Corcoran High School in 1997. SGT Orosco enlisted in the Army in November 2001.

Noe Orosco, SGT Orosco's father, had many fond memories of his son. ''He was always happy, that boy,'' Mr. Orosco said. ''In grade school, he enjoyed assembling model airplanes and rockets.'' Alexander Medina, SGT Orosco's uncle, recounted his nephew's military service. ''He fully understood the circumstances and consequences of everything going on,'' Mr. Medina said. ''He still believed it was the right thing to do.''

SGT Orosco is survived by his father, Noe Orosco; his wife, Elizabeth; his three children, Adrian Orosco, Junior, Andrew Orosco, and Isabelle Orosco; his uncle, Alexander Medina; and his aunt, Janey Medina.

SGT Orosco proudly served America. His service and sacrifice will always be remembered.

## CELEBRATING THE MEMORY OF JOANNE COONTZ

### HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, we have lost an incredible individual to our society. Joanne Coontz, a trailblazer for women in the City of Orange has recently passed away at the age of 88.

Ms. Coontz was the city's first female council member and the first woman elected as mayor. She will always be remembered for her political pioneering and her tremendous dedication to the community. During her long political career, Ms. Coontz contributed and advocated to various causes, some of which include the expansion of the Orange Public Library and the creation of its history center. Moreover, Ms. Coontz helped establish a Veterans Memorial at Depot Park and Pitcher Park.

After her time in politics, she spent the rest of her life helping her community through nonprofits such as Friendly Center and the Orange Community Historical Foundation, volunteering with the Orange Unified School District, and much more.

Ms. Coontz has contributed to the City of Orange in numerous ways and will always be remembered as one of the first trailblazers. The City of Orange will never be quite the same without Ms. Coontz.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great privilege that I celebrate the memory of Ms. Joanne Coontz. A vibrant member of the City of Orange community, taken from us too soon.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI MARINE MASTER SERGEANT (MSGT) BRIAN PATRICK MCANULTY

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of fallen Mississippi Marine Master Sergeant (MSgt) Brian Patrick McAnulty who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on December 11, 2006, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. MSgt McAnulty was killed when the CH–53 helicopter he was riding in crashed just after takeoff in Anbar province, Iraq. MSgt McAnulty was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, lst Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, California.

MSgt McAnulty grew up in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and graduated from Warren Central High School in 1985. MSgt McAnulty then attended Hinds Community College in Raymond, Mississippi for three semesters before enlisting in the United States Marine Corps in April 1988.

A Department of Defense (DoD) news release included details of MSgt McAnulty's personal life and his many professional accomplishments. His first assignment was to Marine Corps Security Force Battalion, Norfolk, VA, for service onboard the aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy (CV–67) In 1991, he was assigned to Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team (FAST) Company, Norfolk, Virginia. In 1992,

MSgt McAnulty was selected for service with Marine Security Guard Battalion. Later he was assigned to Marine Security Guard detachments in Asuncion, Paraguay, Seoul, Korea, and Budapest, Hungary. In 1996, orders brought him to 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, California, for duty with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines. During that same assignment, he deployed with Battalion Landing Team 2/4 as part of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit from November 1998 until April 1999.

MSgt McAnulty would further distinguish himself in 2001. When he was reassigned to Marine Security Guard Battalion and trained to serve in the coveted position of detachment commander. MSgt McAnulty commanded Marine Security Guard detachments at U.S embassies in war-torn Bujumbura, Burundi, and in the dangerous city of Bogota, Colombia. After excelling as a detachment commander and being named ''Detachment of the Year'' in South America, MSgt McAnulty was selected to serve as an instructor/advisor at the Marine Security Guard school in Quantico, Virginia from April 2004 to April 2006. Weeks prior to this assignment, during civil unrest in Haiti, MSgt McAnulty's expertise in embassy security and low intensity conflict was needed. He was sent to the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to ensure the readiness of the embassy's Marine detachment and provide tactical advice to security personnel.

When MSgt McAnulty returned to the United States, he assumed the duties of instructor at the Marine Security Guard Battalion headquarters in Quantico, VA, where he revamped the weapons training for the Marine Security Guard Battalion and was directly responsible for improving the overall marksmanship capability of Marine Guards. This proved vital to the battalion's role in the Global War on Terrorism. In conjunction with teaching duties, he continued an active security role within the Marine Security Guard Battalion. In December 2004, when terrorists attacked the US Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, MSgt McAnulty was immediately sent in to provide extra security and provide tactical and personal guidance to the Marines. In March 2006, MSgt McAnulty was transferred to 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 1st Marine Division in Twentynine Palms, California, and served as the company Gunnery Sergeant for Weapons Company and later as the Operations Chief. He deployed to Iraq with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines for combat operations in direct support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Brian McAnulty, MSgt McAnulty's brother, described his brother's devotion to service in an Associated Press news article. ''He loved what he was doing,'' Brian said. ''He wouldn't have rather been anywhere else.''

His many awards include the Navy And Marine Corps Commendation Medal (With Gold Star), the Navy And Marine Corps Achievement Medal (With 3 Gold Stars), the Navy Unit Commendation (With Bronze Star), the Navy Meritorious Commendation Medal (With 3 Bronze Stars), the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal (With 4 Bronze Stars), the National Defense Service Medal (With 1 Bronze Star), the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (5th Award), the Navy And Marine Corps Overseas Service Ribbon, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, the Marine Security Guard Ribbon (3rd Award), the Expert Pistol (6th Award), and the Expert Rifle (9th Award).

MSgt McAnulty is survived by his parents, Robert and Frances McAnulty; brother and sister-in-law, Brett and Stacy McAnulty; and his two nieces, Cora McAnulty and Lily McAnulty.

MSgt McAnulty distinguished himself throughout his military career. His service and sacrifice will always be remembered.

## CONGRATULATING BRIANNA HALLER OF THE FATIMA COMETS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

### HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Brianna Haller of the Fatima Comets Cross Country team on winning the Class 2 Girls Individual Cross Country State Championship.

Brianna Haller and her coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing Brianna Haller on a job well done.

## IN RECOGNITION OF BILL NALEVANKO FOR TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS OF FEDERAL SERVICE

### HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bill Nalevanko, who will retire from the National Park Service on January 3, 2018. Bill spent twenty-seven years in federal service, twenty of which were with the National Park Service at the Steamtown, a national historic site dedicated to Scranton's industrial heritage and steam railroad transportation.

Bill began his tenure with the National Park Service as Volunteer-in-Park in 1996, shortly after Steamtown's grand opening in 1995. He worked his way up the ranks, becoming a seasonal employee and eventually a Public Information Officer and Webmaster for the historic site. For two decades, Bill has helped thousands of park visitors discover the wealth of history featured at the Steamtown National Historic Site.

It is an honor to recognize Bill as he enters a well-deserved retirement. I am grateful to him for his career of service helping to preserve the history of America's railroads. His twenty-seven years on the job is a credit to his community devotion, and I wish him all the best in his retirement.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for Roll Call votes 674 and 675 on Tuesday, December 12, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call vote 674 and Nay on 675.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN SOLDIER ARMY STAFF SERGEANT (SSG) MILTON RIVERA-VARGAS

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Staff Sergeant (SSG) Milton Rivera-Vargas who paid the ultimate sacrifice on December 8, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. SSG Rivera-Vargas suffered a heart attack and died while on guard duty in Kalsu, Iraq. SSG Rivera-Vargas was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 296th Infantry Regiment, Puerto Rico Army National Guard, Sabana Grande, Puerto Rico.

Minerva Rivera, SSG Rivera-Vargas' niece, paid tribute to her uncle on a memorial website. ''My uncle was the best person around,'' Minerva said. ''He always had a smile on his face. He always protected us in every way. It has been three years since he passed away and there is not a day that passes that I don't think of him or speak of him. I still remember the last day I saw him. The last thing he told us was to pray for him and to not worry about him because he would be home soon. That day never came.''

SSG Rivera-Vargas was laid to rest at Los Robles Memorial park in Cabo Rojo, Cabo Rojo Municipality, Puerto Rico, USA.

SSG Rivera-Vargas proudly served our nation. His service and sacrifice will always be remembered.

## CONGRATULATING THE FATIMA COMETS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

### HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Fatima Comets Girls Cross Country team on winning the Class 2 Cross Country State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Fatima Comets Girls Cross Country team for a job well done.

## HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH

### HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 50th anniversary of New Hope Baptist Church in Hampton, Virginia.

New Hope Baptist Church began as New Hope Mission in 1967. Former members of New Emmanuel Baptist Church in Newport News, Virginia felt compelled to establish their own place of worship, and they began to meet and cultivate their fellowship. The group originally began meeting in a store on North Avenue and later at Carver High School, both in Newport News. Reverend C.B. Potts served as the mission's spiritual leader during this time. The mission officially became New Hope Baptist Church in October of 1967.

Reverend C.B. Potts oversaw the church's move into their first building on April 10, 1969. With more space, proper furnishings, and a growing community presence, the church soon experienced an increase in membership and the creation of their first choir. Pastor G.I. Melton, installed as pastor in 1970, provided guidance and direction throughout this period. Under his leadership, the church saw over 100 new members and the creation of the Children's Church Ministry and Transportation Ministry. This growth continued over the years, and under the leadership of Pastor Melton the congregation broke ground on a new sanctuary in 1980. The construction of New Hope Baptist Church's new sanctuary was completed in August of 1981, two months after the death of Pastor Melton. Today, New Hope Baptist Church has grown beyond any of its founders' expectations. Members of New Hope Baptist Church have seen the expansion of the church through membership and the creation of many ministries such as the Women's Fellowship, Men's Fellowship, Evangelism Team, Seniors' Ministry, Tutorial Ministry, and many more. In January 1995, Rev. Dr. Christopher C. Carter, Sr. was installed as Pastor. In 2004, Pastor Carter led the congregation as they broke ground on a 12,000 square foot facility located in Hampton, Virginia, where they worship today.

Over the years, the congregation of New Hope Baptist Church has been dutifully led in prayer and service by the following men of faith—Rev. C.B. Potts, Rev. W.W. Butler, Rev. G.I. Melton, Rev. Dr. Ivan Harris, Rev. Virgil Newkirk, and Rev Dr. Christopher C. Carter, Sr.

Mr. Speaker, as New Hope Baptist Church celebrates its 50th anniversary, the church's congregation can look back on its history with pride. I would like to congratulate Pastor Carter and the entire New Hope Baptist Church community on this special occasion. I wish the church another 50 years of growth and fellowship.

## CONGRATULATING THE FESTUS TIGERS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

### HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Festus Tigers Boys Cross Country team on winning the Class 3 Cross Country State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Festus Tigers Boys Cross Country team for a job well done.

## TRIBUTE TO GRAYDON CARTER ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM VANITY FAIR

### HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay a special tribute and recognize the career of hall of fame magazine editor Graydon Carter. Graydon Carter is one of the great journalists of our time and retires today after 25 years as editor of Vanity Fair. He co-founded Spy Magazine which he also edited, as well as The New York Observer. And at Vanity Fair, he gave writers like Michael Lewis and Dominick Dunne a venue, and Christopher Hitchens, one of the great journalists of our time. Graydon said about Christopher Hitchens upon his passing that he was "a wit, a charmer and a troublemaker and to those who knew him well, he was a gift from—dare I say it?—God." I'm sure Hitch would have said the same about Graydon. From the beginning of Spy Magazine and through the days of The New York Observer and Vanity Fair, he pointed out the shortcomings of Donald Trump. And he gave him the appellation "short-fingered vulgarian." For that and much more, Graydon Carter will be remembered—a great journalist, a great human being, a great raconteur, and a friend. Graydon Carter will also be remembered for publishing such great writers as David Halberstam, Walter Isaacson, David Kamp, Nicholas Lemann, Jeffrey E. Stern and William Langewiesche, and for printing the brilliant photographic images of such artists as Annie Leibovitz, Mark Selinger and Jonas Freedwall Karlson. With a showman's charisma, he brought glamor and politics together, throwing some of the best-remembered parties in New York, Los Angeles and Washington, including hosting the annual White House Correspondents Association Vanity Fair after-party, the most sought-after invitation in D.C. A gourmet, his signature restaurants The Waverly Inn in the West Village and Monkey Bar on the Upper East Side are destinations in good taste. Graydon Carter was also the producer of documentaries including "Gonzo: The Life and Work of Hunter S. Thompson" and "The Kid Stays in the Picture," about legendary Hollywood producer Robert Evans and was a regular at both the Sundance and Cannes film festivals. Print journalism is tough and Graydon Carter will also be remembered for his successful navigation through the current age of media disruption. I wish him all the best in retirement.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER ARMY SPECIALIST (SPC) TERRY KISHAUN GORDON

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Specialist (SPC) Terry "Dantez" Kishaun Gordon who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on December 18, 2013, during Operation Enduring Freedom. SPC Gordon was killed when the Black Hawk UH–60 he was riding in crashed in Naw Bahar, Afghanistan. Also killed were Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CW2) Randy L. Billings, Sergeant (SGT) Peter Bohler, Sergeant First Class (SFC) Omar W. Forde, Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CW2) Joshua B. Silverman, and Staff Sergeant (SSG) Jesse L. Williams. SPC Gordon was assigned to 1st Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kansas.

Following the crash, a statement was issued from Fort Riley. "We offer our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of these 'Big Red One Soldiers,'" Major General Paul E. Funk, II, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley Commanding General, said. "We stand ready to support them and I urge our community and the nation, while remembering their sacrifices this holiday season, to do the same."

According to the Associated Press, SPC Gordon, a Quitman, Mississippi native, graduated from Quitman High School in 2011. While in high school, SPC Gordon served as a member of the high school's U.S. Army Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) Michael McDonald, Quitman High School principal, described SPC Gordon as a great young man. "His leadership and confidence was clearly evident," Mr McDonald said. "He just oozed confidence and he was dependable and well-respected among the students here." A Mankato Times article states that SPC Gordon loved helicopters and that he knew early on that he was meant for the Army because he could fly on a Black Hawk.

Miriam Gordon, SPC Gordon's aunt, said he was a happy child who loved his family, friends, and his country. "Every time you saw him, he had a smile," Mrs. Gordon said. "He always did little pranks and jokes. If you were having a bad day and saw him, you had a great day. He brought the goodness out of people. He was bigger than anything I could ever imagine as far as being a model child. Sometimes they stray, but this child didn't stray."

SPC Gordon and his fallen comrades were honored on January 9, 2013, during a memorial service held at Fort Riley, Kansas. Nearly 500 people attended the service that was held at the Morris Hill Chapel. Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Matt Weinshel commanded the crew while deployed in Afghanistan. "Each of these

soldiers knew the risks they assumed," LTC Weinshel said. "They loved their mission and each other. They truly loved flying and told me so on several occasions." During the service, speakers told those in attendance that the soldiers were focused on their work, but also smiled and offered hugs to break the tension while preparing helicopters for missions during deployment.

SPC Gordon is survived by his father, Terry W. Gordon; his mother, Sabina R. Edwards; his sister, Terruna Gordon; his stepfather, David Edwards; and his two half-brothers, David Edwards, Jr., and William Edwards.

SPC Gordon proudly serviced America. His sacrifice to protect the freedoms we all enjoy will not be forgotten.

## RECOGNIZING WAWA'S COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING HUNGER, HONORING GRAND OPENING

### HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. BRENDON F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to Wawa, Inc., a Pennsylvania based company that will be opening up their very first store in our nation's capital tomorrow. The citizens of Pennsylvania are well acquainted with Wawa food stores; it's where many of them go for their morning coffee as well as a common destination for fresh food at lunch or dinner time.

Therefore I would like to recognize Wawa as a Pennsylvania company with a firm commitment to fighting hunger and serving the greater good. At Thursday's grand opening, Wawa will announce its "Lending a Helping Hoagie Program," which will donate a portion of the new location's first week of hoagie sales to the Capital Area Food Bank. Along with that program, Wawa will present the food bank with a grant of $10,000 to help launch its sustainable "Fresh Community Market" initiative.

Wawa's efforts in the fight against hunger do not end there. Its Share Donation Food Program is a smart, compassionate program that quickly distributes leftover hot food—that would otherwise go to waste—to the communities that need it most. Additionally, until the end of this year, Wawa will continue its "Check Out Hunger" campaign that allows customers to donate to Feeding America Food Banks at checkout.

I am proud to say that this Pennsylvania institution, with the help of its loyal customers around the country, directly fights hunger in the communities it serves. Wawa stands as an example of a company that recognizes that its obligations do not end at its bottom line. It demonstrates that corporations do not have to choose between being prosperous and undertaking initiatives to help communities. I applaud Wawa for its commitment to fighting hunger, and hope that other companies will follow its example and find innovative ways to make a difference in their community.

## CONGRATULATING THE FESTUS TIGERS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

### HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Festus Tigers Girls Cross Country team on winning the Class 3 Cross Country State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Festus Tigers Girls Cross Country team for a job well done.

## HONORING GILLETTE CHILDREN'S SPECIALTY HEALTHCARE ON ITS 120TH ANNIVERSARY

### HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare of Saint Paul, Minnesota on its 120th anniversary of providing world class, compassionate care for children and their families.

Before the turn of the 20th Century, two pioneering leaders, Jessie Haskins and Dr. Arthur Gillette, recognized the acute need to provide a place where children with disabilities could receive state-of-the-art care that was tailor-made to fit their needs. At their urging, in 1897 the Minnesota legislature created what would later be named Gillette Children's Hospital, the first such institution in the country to focus exclusively on treating children with disabilities. Today, not far from its first location on the shores of Lake Phalen, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare is celebrating 120 years of outstanding service to the public and groundbreaking treatment of children in our community and from around the globe.

Gillette Children's serves an incredibly important calling in our state and country. By staying focused on what a child can do, rather than what they cannot, Gillette Children's helps to make the difference in how a child will recover and grow after receiving care. Caring for children and families from all across the United States and around the world, Gillette Children's has improved the lives of countless children and their families since day one.

It is often said, that Gillette Children's has soul. This is because it not just a hospital, but a special place that connects entire families. By providing lifelong care to individuals who were first treated there as children and now are adults, Gillette Children's creates deep and meaningful bonds between the children, staff and volunteers. This unique practice is one of many reasons why Gillette Children's stands out as an extraordinary example of excellence in care and community stewardship.

As medical technology has improved, so too has Gillette Children's capacity to treat young patients who experience some of the most complex, traumatic and rare conditions. Home to the James R. Gage Center for Gait and Motion Analysis, the hospital is one of only seven such accredited centers in the country that helps to improve mobility and walking among children who have walking and movement disorders.

Since its founding in 1897, staff devotion to compassionate and supportive care for children undergoing treatment and recovery has remained steadfast. Today, each child's emotional well-being remains at the core of Gillette Children's approach to medical care. Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the 120th anniversary of Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare for all that it does to improve the lives of children in Minnesota and beyond.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI MARINE CORPORAL (CPL) MICHAEL BRANDON PRESLEY

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Marine Corporal (Cpl) Michael Brandon Presley who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on December 14, 2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Cpl Presley died at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany from wounds he sustained on December 12 from a suicide, vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Fallujah, Iraq. Cpl Presley was assigned to 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

According to the Associated Press, Cpl Presley, a Batesville, Mississippi native, was a standout student at North Delta School. Cpl Presley was a lineman for the school's 2000 state football championship team when it won the Class 3A title. John Howell, North Delta School principal, said Cpl Presley kept in touch with his teachers while he was stationed overseas. "The neat thing that made him stand out for those of us who taught him was the way he made a point to reconnect with us periodically," Mr. Howell said. "Often when you teach, you have to guess at the work that you're doing. Brandon let us know that he appreciated us, and that made him stand out more than other students I have taught."

The official website of the U.S. Marine Corps included a detailed account of Cpl Presley's service and commitment to the Marine Corps. Cpl Presley joined the Marine Corps on September 22, 2003. He served with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Okinawa, Japan, and subsequently reported to the 2d Combat Engineer Battalion for duty as a motor transport operator in March 2005. Cpl Presley was a skilled operator remembered for his broad smile, love of live, and his devotion to duty. His accomplishments and warrior spirit will forever grace the passage spaces of 2d Marine Division while attached to 1st Battalion, Sixth Marines.

Details of Cpl Presley's bravery were included on a memorial website. The author recounted the details of the day Cpl was mortally wounded. ''Corporal Presley was the vehicle commander for the second Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVA) in the convoy,'' the author wrote. ''As the convoy passed a taxi that had pulled off to the right side of the route, the taxi pulled out and into the path of Cpl Presley's vehicle. When Corporal Presley observed this, he immediately started to initiate escalation of force procedures. Due to the fact that the vehicle was non-responsive, Cpl Presley drew his M16 A4 and was preparing to engage the lone occupant of the taxi. As he did this, the SVBIED initiated its device early, before it had actually impacted the MTVA. This action undoubtedly saved the life of the MTVA driver. Cpl Presley was wounded by shrapnel in the blast and later died from his wounds. Cpl Presley's quick actions saved not only his driver, but also the cargo that they were carrying, the Iraq ballots He valiantly put his fellow Marines and mission accomplishment ahead of his own safety.''

A relative of Cpl Presley recounted the day of his memorial service. ''There were two huge fire ladder trucks parked across from the funeral home. Their ladders were fully extended,'' the relative wrote. ''Draped between them was a huge American flag. As the procession made its way to the church from the funeral home, there were firefighters, local police, state police, sheriffs, active and retired military lining the street and all standing at attention and saluting as the process passed by. It was really amazing to witness.''

Cpl Presley was laid to rest at Magnolia Cemetery in Batesville, Mississippi. Cpl Presley is survived by his mother Pam Cousar; his stepfather, John Cousar; his brother, Colin Hawkins; and his grandparents, Mary Sue Presley, Mary Frances Woods and Mitchell Woods.

Cpl Presley served our nation with courage and bravery. His service and sacrifice to protect the freedoms we all enjoy will not be forgotten.

## CONGRATULATING THE HELIAS CRUSADERS VOLLEYBALL TEAM

### HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Helias Crusaders Volleyball team on winning the Class 3 Volleyball State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Helias Crusaders Volleyball team for a job well done.

## PROTECTING NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES

### HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I held a hearing on the current situation facing North Korean asylum seekers and assessed both China's obligation to protect refugees and the effectiveness of global efforts to stop what the U.N. Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in North Korea called crimes against humanity experienced by refugees.

At a recent House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, North Korean defector Ambassador Thae Yong-ho testified about the strategic value of both disseminating information into North Korea and the protection of North Korean refugees in China.

Drawing on an analogy about the fall of the Berlin Wall, Ambassador Thae claimed that there may be a similar result if China stopped repatriations of refugees and the U.S. and the international community expanded ''soft power'' news and information flows into North Korea.

As the Congress continues to look at ways to best apply maximum diplomatic and financial press on the regime of Kim Jong-un, this hearing explored the strategic relevance of further pressing the Chinese government to protect North Korean refugees and evaluate the impact of surging outside information into North Korea.

Amid escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula, we cannot forget those suffering under the North Korean regime and those North Korean refugees who are in China

North Korean asylum seekers are at imminent risk of repatriation, torture, sexual violence, forced abortions, hard labor and even execution. China's repatriation of North Koreans is a stark violation of both the spirit and the letter of the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol to which China has acceded.

The Chinese government has a lot to answer for. It is no wonder that the UN Commission on Inquiry for North Korea Human Rights concluded that the Government of the People's Republic of China is aiding and abetting in crimes against humanity by forcibly repatriating North Korean refugees.

As many as 90 percent of North Korean women refugees in China fall prey to traffickers who sell the refugees into sexual slavery or forced marriages.

Labor trafficking is also pervasive The government of North Korea and the government and businesses in China, Russia, and elsewhere in the world, profit from the trafficking of North Korean laborers.

In recent months, Chinese authorities reportedly deported hundreds of South Korean missionaries and NGO workers who have provided crucial help to the North Korean refugees in China.

The international community—especially the United Nations, the Trump Administration and the U.S. Congress—must insist that China honor its treaty obligations and end its egregious practice of systematic repatriation of North Korean refugees.

Chinese officials and businesses, complicit in repatriation of North Korean refugees or those who profit from the labor trafficking should be held accountable.

The Congress has given the Administration the sanction tools that if used would send the right message—whether through the North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act, the Global Magnitsky Act, or those sanctions attached to China's Tier 3 designation for trafficking in persons.

All should be used strategically and swiftly to send a clear message. For too long the world has tolerated China's failures to protect refugees. Those complicit in the repatriations of refugees and those who profit from the trafficking of North Koreans will be held accountable.

The ending of repatriations should be a bellwether for judging China's willingness to curtail Kim Jong-un' s nuclear ambitions.

In addition to the protection of North Korea refugees, this hearing also assessed global efforts to surge news and information into North Korea.

Expansion of existing efforts to disseminate information into North Korea is critically important if for nothing else than to tarnish and undermine the Kim family's cult of personality.

The Kim family cult must be taken seriously as a national security threat and a barometer of Kim Jong-un's power. This cult of personality—sometimes called Juche—has inspired devotion from the North Korean people because of the cradle to grave propaganda they endure.

We must undermine the Kim family cult and the propaganda that grants Kim Jong-un almost god-like status. This status has allowed three generations of the Kim family to starve and abuse the North Korean people and divert scarce resources to the military and nuclear programs.

We must have an information surge into North Korea. Human rights groups are smuggling DVDs and USB sticks with video about the Kim family's sins into North Korea right now. Balloons are launched across the border with promises of a better life in South Korea. Radio programs broadcast daily messages and news, urging North Korea's ''elite'' to defect and turn against Kim Jong-un.

We know some of these efforts are having effect. We saw several high-level defections of diplomats, military officers, and the families of North Korea's elites in the last year. The number of asylum-seekers, depressed for several years by upgraded security efforts in China, has again begun to rise.

Efforts to get information into North Korea must be expanded dramatically. Washington should be leading this covert effort, working primarily with North Korea defectors groups in South Korea and with other human rights organizations.

The North Korean defector groups should be front and center in this effort—they know North Korea and they know the minds of its people. They know what information is needed to permanently tarnish the Kim family cult and what will motivate military leaders to defect.

Yesterday's hearing took place amid growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. We must seek all viable options to deal with and resolve the North Korean issue, not only in military/diplomatic terms, but also in terms of human rights and freedom of the North Korean people.

I welcome and thank all of our witnesses. I valued hearing their observations and insights.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. MARK SANFORD

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 672 and YEA on Roll Call No. 673.

## RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF SPACE CENTER HOUSTON

### HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Space Center Houston, the Official Visitor Center of the NASA Johnson Space Center.

Since opening in 1992, Space Center Houston has welcomed nearly twenty million visitors and currently hosts nearly one million visitors annually in its 250,000 square-foot educational complex. The Manned Space Flight Foundation, a private entity separate from NASA, funds Space Center Houston, its educational programs and the preservation of artifacts in its space science museum. Educational emphasis is placed on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in a fun and engaging way

At Space Center Houston you can see the history and future of human spaceflight under one roof and it is the only Smithsonian Affiliate museum in Houston. The Visitor's Center is home to a one-of-a-kind exhibit displaying the world's only shuttle replica (Independence) mounted on an original Shuttle Carrier Aircraft (NASA 905). For the first time, only at Space Center Houston, you can see the spacecraft from the first and last lunar landings under the same roof. Currently, Space Center Houston is partnering with the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum to display both the Apollo 11 and Apollo 17 command modules to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of our nation's extraordinary achievement of man's first step on the Moon in 1969.

Through Space Center Houston, the foundation can teach future generations how far we've come with the space program and emphasize how far we have to go to touch the rest of our universe.

Mr. Speaker, as the Congressman who represents Space Center Houston, and as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Space, it is my distinct honor to recognize Space Center Houston on this milestone occasion.

## CONGRATULATING THE NEW HAVEN SHAMROCKS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

### HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the New Haven Shamrocks Boys Cross Country team on winning the Class 1 Cross Country State Championship.

This team and their coach should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the New Haven Shamrocks Boys Cross Country team for a job well done.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER ARMY SPECIALIST (SPC) RAPHAEL SAPTIAN DAVIS

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Specialist (SPC) Raphael Saptian Davis who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on December 2, 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. SPC Davis was killed when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device in Tampa, Iraq. SPC Davis was assigned to B Company, 223rd Engineer Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, based in Calhoun City, Mississippi.

According to the Associated Press, SPC Davis grew up in the Mississippi Delta. He lived with his mother in Tutwiler, Mississippi. SPC Davis graduated from Tallahatchie High School in Webb, Mississippi in 1998. SPC Davis attended Holmes Community College in Goodman, Mississippi where he was pursuing a degree in engineering. He then attended Hinds Community College in Jackson, Mississippi. Davis joined the Mississippi Army National Guard in 2001. SPC Davis was deployed during his second year of college.

Clifton Bailey, SPC Davis' father, remembers the last time he talked with his son on the phone. ''He called me on November 16th,'' Mr. Bailey said. ''He tracked me down until he found me at work. I never heard him sound so happy. He told me he was coming home. We all assumed he meant Tutwiler, but he knew he was going to his heavenly home. He was calling to say goodbye.'' Betty Davis Pimpton, SPC Davis' mother, said she always worried about her son as any mother would. ''You always hope for the best, never thinking about the worst that can happen,'' Mrs. Pimpton said. ''I was really proud of his service. He enjoyed it and wanted to make a career out of it.

Lakeitha Johnson, a classmate of SPC Davis, paid tribute to him on a memorial website. ''There isn't a day that goes by when I don't think about my classmate and friend, Raphael,'' Lakeitha said. ''I think everyone here agrees that the last two years without him have been tough. Even though his loss has left a huge void in our community, I always think of him and smile. I know that you are in heaven smiling down on us and we love you and miss you so much. We'll see you when we reach that other shore, Raph.''

SPC Davis was the father of three children, Raphael Davis, Junior, Ravin Davis, and Razavier Seon Davis. His youngest child, Razavier Seon Davis, was born four weeks before SPC Davis was killed. Deetra Tucker, mother of Razavier, was also a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard.

A funeral was held for SPC Davis at West Tallahatchie High School in Webb, Mississippi. SPC Davis was laid to rest in the family cemetery located on Sharkey Road in Glendora, Mississippi. SPC Davis' sisters and brothers wrote a special tribute to their brother which was printed in the program for the funeral. It read, ''Ralph, our beautiful brother, there's really no need for words. Your life spoke loud and clear. You were not perfect and that's okay. No human being is. You are still our brother and we love you. There's a lot of press these days about how there are no heroes or great men for our children to look up to. They were wrong. Ralph, you are a hero and we will make sure that all of your nieces and nephews know you were that special hero. We love you.''

SPC Davis is survived by his father, Clifton Bailey; his mother, Betty Davis Pimpton; his girlfriend, Deetra Tucker; the mother of his two oldest children, Kimberlie Blount; his three children, Raphael Davis, Junior, Ravin Davis, and Razavier Seon Davis; his eleven brothers, Cedric Davis, Demarcus Davis, Lamonte Harris, Clifton Davis, Junior, Zavier Bailey, Bernard Berryhill, Taierry Brown, Areail Wallace, Steve Hill, Terrence Steele, and Maurice Steele; his two sisters, Wynde Bailey, and Premmie Stevenson.

SPC Davis will always be remembered for his service and sacrifice to protect America and to preserve the freedoms we all enjoy.

## GODSPEED MARTIN WHITMER

### HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, we are thinking of my family friend Martin Whitmer and his wife, the former Julie Thurmond, as Martin is scheduled for open heart surgery this Thursday, December 14. We pray for his family in this difficult time and have faith that he will recuperate quickly to become even stronger than before.

## IN HONOR OF LANETT WINNING AHSAA CLASS 2A HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TITLE

### HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize Lanett High School for winning the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) Class 2A football state title for the first time ever.

The Panthers sealed their victory by beating Leroy High School 33–15 on December 8 at Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the students and faculty of Lanett High School, the coaches, the players and all the Panthers fans on this exciting achievement. Go Panthers.

## RECOGNIZING THE BAYTOWN SUN ON ITS DESIGNATION AS A TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL MARKER

### HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize The Baytown Sun for its designation as an official Texas State Historical Marker.

The Baytown Sun can trace its roots to the weekly newspaper The Goose Creek Gasser, established by Frank Boyer in 1919, two months before construction began on the Humble Oil & Refining Company's Baytown Refinery. The Gasser was created to serve the rapidly growing tri-cities of Goose Creek, Pelly, and Baytown, which evolved from oil boom towns to a permeant community. In 1924, new ownership the paper's name to the semi-weekly tribune, and again in 1929 to the daily tribune, when it's circulation was around 4,500.

The financial strain of the great depression led the owners of Goose Creek's Tribune, The Pelly Telegram, and Baytown's Tri-Cities News-Herald to merge into a single paper, the Tri-Cities Sun, operating out of the Tribune's building. First published on July 19, 1931, it was renamed The Daily Sun two years later.

Goose Creek, Pelly and Baytown consolidated in 1948, and the paper, renamed The Baytown Sun, became the sole daily newspaper in the old tri-cities area. In 1949, the facility was greatly expanded, including a new press and, for the first time an air conditioned work space. That year, The Sun surpassed a circulation of 8,000 and employed forty individuals. In 1965 the sun moved to its current location. The first papers printed at the new location went out to more than 12,700 subscribers.

Longtime Publishers and editors of the Sun included William Pendergraft, Robert Matherne, Fred Hartman, and Preston Pendergrass. Janie Gray has served as Publisher since 2010.

Since 1919, The Baytown Sun and its predecessors have primarily focused on the area's local news and history, while providing readers with matters of state, national and international importance. Today, The Baytown Sun covers Southeast Harris County, Chambers County, and Southeast Liberty County.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to recognize The Baytown Sun on its designation as a Texas State Historical Marker.

## TRIBUTE TO COMMISSIONER TIMOTHY (TIM) BRADFORD

### HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Tim Bradford graduated from Richard T. Crane High School on the Westside of Chicago where he was an outstanding athlete and well-liked student. He secured a job at Western Electric before obtaining and rising to a senior level position at Quaker Oats where he worked for more than twenty-five years. He later became a successful entrepreneur and owned a dock fish feed franchise and had an interest in a St. Louis based Miller Beer distributor-ship. Tim was passionate about life, civic engagement and politics. He served as commissioner and President of the Olympia Fields Park District and Administrator of Rich Township. Tim's greatest legacy will be his service to the community and helping those in need is his passion, his mission. He was a well-respected pillar of the community who made sure that the south suburban community of Cook County was never overlooked.

To say that he was immersed in politics would be an understatement. Tim worked around the clock and became known as the Godfather of south suburban politics. He served as vice chair for Cook County Democrats, a Commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, RichTownship Committeeman, Rich Township Administrator, Matteson Rotary Club, Olympia Fields Police Board and countless other civic organizations, boards and commissions. Notwithstanding all of his external activities and affiliations, Tim was totally devoted to his wife of 51 years, Mary-Ann and all other members of the Bradford clan, his mother, his brothers, his children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other family members and friends. Timothy (Tim) Bradford was an extraordinary man filled with boundless energy, a great mind and a heart filled with love for his family and anyone that he might meet.

Love is patient, love is kind, love is generous, love is Commissioner Timothy (Tim) Bradford.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI SOLDIER ARMY STAFF SERGEANT (SSG) ROBERT LEE LOVE, JUNIOR

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Army Staff Sergeant (SSG) Robert Lee Love, Junior who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on December 1, 2006, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. SSG Love died from injuries he sustained when an improvised explosive device detanated near his vehicle during combat operations in Ar Ramadi, Iraq. SSG Love was assigned to the 16th Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Glessen, Germany.

According to the Associated Press, SSG Love, a Livingston, Alabama native, graduated from Livingston High School in 1996. Mary Love, SSG Love's mother, said he enlisted in the Army following graduation and served in the military a total of eight years. Prior to deployment, SSG Love lived in Germany with his wife, Army Staff Sergeant (SSG) Brianna K. Love. The couple had a three-year-old daughter, Brianna. SSG Robert Love also had an 11-year-old daughter, Tanessa.

The Meridian Star newspaper interviewed members of SSG Love's family. Mary Love said her son was liked by everyone. ''He was a very sweet person who got along with everybody,'' Mary Love said. ''Everybody loved him and he loved everybody.'' Robert Lee Love, Senior, SSG Love's father, said the loss of their son was difficult. ''It has been hard, but we are holding up,'' Mr. Love said.

Graveside services for SSG Love were held on December 20, 2006 at the Pentecostal Memorial Gardens Cemetery in Russell, Mississippi. Elder Keith Tisdale and Bishop Marcell Evins officiated the funeral. SSG Love is survived by his wife, Brianna; his two daughters, Brianna, and Tanessa; his father, Robert L. Love, Senior; his mother, Mary Love; his two sisters, Rickitta Thomas and Evelyn Ford; and two brothers, Reginald Love and Jeremy Love.

SSG Love proudly served America and gave his life to protect the freedoms we all enjoy.

## TRIBUTE TO JOHNNIE MYERS

### HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, In honor of Mrs. Johnnie Elizabeth Hammontree Myers, I would like to celebrate the amazing life she lived with my colleagues and others.

Johnnie was a long time close, personal friend to both me, and my father, Congressman John J. Duncan, Sr. There couldn't have been a stronger supporter of the Republican cause.

Born in 1919, in Greenback, Tennessee, Johnnie was brought up attending Pine Grove Presbyterian Church where she would become an elder, clerk, and life time member.

She volunteered her time in the community as well. She was a past chair of the Loudon County March of Dimes, president of the Loudon County Republican Women, and was the first female vice-chairman of the Loudon County Republican Party.

She was a staunch, dedicated Republican, but more importantly, she was a strong Christian and truly patriotic American.

When she wasn't serving her church, or our community, she was enjoying life to the fullest.

She cheered on the University of Tennessee men's basketball team as often as she could with the season tickets she held since 1962.

She also loved to embark on trips to new places including Hawaii, Alaska, Israel, and Europe.

Johnnie is an example to us all to live life each day with humility, compassion for others, and grateful hearts. She will be greatly missed by me, my family, and our community.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation is a better place today because of the life that Johnnie Myers led, and I hope that many people will read this tribute honoring one really outstanding woman.

## HONORING THE CAREER OF DR. DAVID ZOLDOSKE

### HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. David Zoldoske on the occasion of his retirement after 35 years of dedicated service to the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology at California State University, Fresno (Fresno State). He has been a leader in the effort for sustainable irrigation techniques across California.

David earned his Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics from Fresno State. He worked as a student research assistant, specializing in irrigation, before being hired as a full-time research technician in 1983.

David has worked at Fresno State for over 30 years. He currently serves as Director for the Center for Irrigation and Technology, the California Water Institute, and was also named the Executive Director of Water Initiatives at Fresno State. Through this capacity, he guides the university's water technology, water resource management, and policy initiatives.

David has served in a number of leadership positions throughout his career. He served as the President of the Irrigation Association, and the American Society of Agronomy California Chapter. David was also the founding Executive Director for the Water Resources and Policy Initiative for the California State University System, Senior Fellow with the California Council on Science and Technology, as well as member of the ''SMART'' Water Application Executive Committee. David has also been named an Honorary Member of the American Society of Irrigation Consultants.

David has been a member of the California Department of Food and Agricultural Nitrogen Tracking and Reporting Task Force. He was Co-Chair of the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Committee, Vice-Chair of the California Department of Water Resources Strategic Planning Caucus for New Water Technology, and served as a member of the A–2 Subcommittee to the SBx7–Agriculture Stakeholders Committee.

Over the years, David has received numerous awards from his colleagues and peers. This includes being named ''Person of the Year'' by both the Irrigation Association in 2013 and the California Irrigation Institute in 2015.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I applaud Dr. David Zoldoske for his many years of tireless work on behalf of the Central Valley. His dedication to education is extremely commendable. I have personally worked with David for years in my capacity as a Member of Congress and I can proudly call him my friend. I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the commitment, dedication and success of Dr. David Zoldoske, and wish him well as he embarks on new endeavors.

## RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF FALLEN MISSISSIPPI U.S. AIR FORCE CAPTAIN (CAPT) KERMIT O. EVANS

### HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of U.S. Air Force Captain (Capt) Kermit O. Evans who paid the ultimate sacrifice while defending our nation on December 3, 2006, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Captain Evans died when the Marine Corps CH–46 helicopter he was riding in made an emergency water landing in western Anbar province. Captain Evans was assigned to the 27th Civil Engineer Squadron, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. He deployed with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, Balad Air Base, Iraq. He was one of four service members who died in the accident.

According to the Associated Press, Captain Evans, a Hollandale, Mississippi native, was an avid sports fan and athlete who was pleasant and giving. Margaret Evans, Captain Evans' mother, said her son liked taking things apart and putting them back together. ''He also had an inquisitive personality that probably landed him in his military career as an explosives ordnance disposal technician,'' Mrs. Evans said. ''He liked to see how things work.''

Captain Evans graduated from Mississippi State University where he earned a degree in chemical engineering. Captain Evans enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in August 2001. Following graduation, Captain Evans entered officer training school at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama and received his commission as a second lieutenant in November 2001. He was promoted to captain in November 2005. In the second phase of his Air Force career, Captain Evans entered Explosive Ordnance Disposal School at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. Following graduation, he was stationed at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. While he was serving at Cannon Air Force Base, his unit earned the Sergeant Stryzak Award as the best EOD flight in Air Combat Command. Captain Evans was the head of the bomb squad at the 27th Civil Engineer Squadron, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. In 2011, Cannon AFB officials honored their fallen comrade. They renamed the street in front of the 27th CE Squadron building as Kermit Evans Avenue.

Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) Stephen Wood, 27th Civil Engineer Squadron Commander, said Captain Evans considered the Air Force as a career at a young age. He said Captain Evans had a solid Air Force career as a civil engineer, but wanted to do more, and began exploring bomb disposal. ''That top level stratification was repeated throughout his career,'' Lt Col Wood said.

A funeral service was held for Captain Evans at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada. A memorial service was held at the Simmons High School Gymnatorium in Hollandale, Mississippi. Captain Evans was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia on December 12, 2006.

Captain Evans is survived by his parents, Charles and Margaret Evans; his wife, Perneatha; his son, Kermit Evans, Jr.; and his brother, Kervin Evans.

Captain Evans proudly served our nation. He entered into the military ready to fight for the freedoms we all enjoy. His sacrifice will not be forgotten.

## HARK

### HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a poem, on behalf of Albert Carey Caswell, to honor the men and women of The Armed Forces and the families of the Fallen this Christmas.

HARK

(By: Albert Caswell)

Hark the herald Angels sing
Glory to the new born king
As our Lord up to heaven a new one brings,
Peace on earth and mercy mild
Across this Nation a mother just lost her child,
Who on battlefields of honor stood tall the while
God and sinners reconciled
As our Father looks upon his new Angel and smiles,
Joyful all ye nations rise
For our freedom this day a hero died,
Join the triumph of the skies
A new Angel is on the rise.
Hark the herald Angels sing
Glory to the new born king
As a mother this Christmas stands with tear in her eyes,
For us all her baby died.
Hail the everlasting Lord
Heroes like this heaven was made for,
Light and life to all he brings
As up in heaven his new Angel sings,
Here with healing in his wings
As down below in their sleep,
To his loved ones in his tears in comfort he whispers again we'll meet,
Mild he lay his glory by born that no man may die
As now in men and women of honor we understand why
Bringing hope to all the land
As did this magnificent hero in his short life span.
Peace to every child and man
As too was his plan.
Hark the herald Angels sing
Glory to the new born king
Come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
As do those who stand guard so abundant,
Come ye oh come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold him,
Come and behold them,
Born the King of Angels,
Come let us adore him
Come let us adore him
Oh come let us adore him
Oh come let us adore them,
The Fallen.
Sing choir of Angels, sing in exultation
For those who did not waver, who on this day have met our savior,
Sing all our citizens of heaven above
To all our heroes who gave the greatest love,
Glory to God, glory in the highest
Oh come let us adore him
Oh come let us adore him
Oh come let us adore him
Oh come let us adore them,
All the men and women who have died in war then,
And the families who live in pain the more then.
Christ the Lord

Hark the herald Angels sing,
glory to the newborn King.

## SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2017 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

## MEETINGS SCHEDULED

### DECEMBER 19

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Business meeting to consider the nominations of Scott Garrett, of New Jersey, to be President, Kimberly A. Reed, of West Virginia, to be First Vice President, Mark L. Greenblatt, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, and Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, Judith Delzoppo Pryor, of Ohio, and Claudia Slacik, of New York, each to be a Member of the Board of Directors, all of the Export-Import Bank.

SD–538

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine United States strategy for Syria after ISIS.

SD–419

2 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Peter Hendrick Vrooman, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Rwanda, and Joel Danies, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, both of the Department of State.

SD–419

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Rules and Administration

To hold hearings to examine S. Res. 355, improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate; to be immediately followed by a business meeting to consider S. Res. 355, improving procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate.

SR–301

### DECEMBER 20

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure

To hold hearings to examine freight movement.

SD–406

# Daily Digest

# Senate

## Chamber Action

*Routine Proceedings, pages S7979–S8016*

**Measures Introduced:** Six bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2223–2228, and S. Res. 359–360. **Page S8006**

**Ho Nomination—Agreement:** Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, post-cloture. **Page S8003**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 53 yeas to 44 nays (Vote No. 316), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Pages S8002–03**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 10 a.m., on Thursday, December 14, 2017; and that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and Leader remarks count post-cloture on the nomination. **Page S8009**

**West Nomination—Agreement:** A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at a time to be determined by the Majority Leader, in consultation with the Democratic Leader, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Owen West, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense; that there be 30 minutes of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form, and that following the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination with no intervening action or debate. **Page S8003**

**Compton Nomination—Agreement:** A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at a time to be determined by the Majority Leader, in consultation with the Democratic Leader, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of J. Paul Compton, Jr., of Alabama, to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development; that there be 120 minutes of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form, and that following the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination with no intervening action or debate. **Page S8003**

**Nomination Confirmed:** Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 50 yeas to 47 nays (Vote No. EX. 315), Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

**Pages S7981–S8002, S8016**

**Messages from the House:** **Page S8004**

**Measures Referred:** **Page S8004**

**Executive Communications:** **Pages S8004–06**

**Executive Reports of Committees:** **Page S8006**

**Additional Cosponsors:** **Pages S8006–07**

**Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:** **Pages S8007–08**

**Additional Statements:** **Pages S8003–04**

**Authorities for Committees to Meet:** **Pages S8008–09**

**Privileges of the Floor:** **Page S8009**

**Record Votes:** Two record votes were taken today. (Total—316) **Pages S8002, S8003**

**Adjournment:** Senate convened at 12 noon and adjourned at 7:02 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 14, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S.)

## Committee Meetings

*(Committees not listed did not meet)*

### SAFEGUARDING AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

*Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:* Committee concluded a hearing to examine safeguarding American agriculture in a globalized world, after receiving testimony from former Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, Chair, Blue Ribbon Study Panel on Biodefense; R. D. Meckes, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services State Veterinarian, Raleigh; Richard B. Myers, Kansas State University, Manhattan; and Raymond Hammerschmidt, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

## GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS

*Committee on Armed Services:* Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities received a closed briefing on Department of Defense global counterterrorism operations from Mark E. Mitchell, Acting Assistant Secretary for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict, Major General Albert M. Elton III, USAF, Deputy Director for Special Operations and Counterterrorism, Joint Staff, and Gary Reid, Director of Intelligence and Security, Office of the Undersecretary for Intelligence, all of the Department of Defense.

## TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY/CONCUSSION IN SERVICEMEMBERS

*Committee on Armed Services:* Subcommittee on Personnel concluded a hearing to examine an update on research, diagnosis, and treatment for traumatic brain injury/concussion in servicemembers, after receiving testimony from Joel D. Scholten, Associate Chief of Staff for Rehabilitation Services for the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and David X. Cifu, Senior TBI Specialist, Principal Investigator, Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium, both of the Department of Veteran Affairs; Captain Michael J. Colston, USN, Director, Military Health Policy and Oversight for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs; David W. Dodick, Mayo Clinic; Steven D. Devick, King-Devick technologies, inc; and Christopher M. Miles, Wake Forest University.

## BUSINESS MEETING

*Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:* Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 2202, to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the National Transportation Safety Board, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2200, to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1768, to reauthorize and amend the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute; and

The nomination of Barry Lee Myers, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and a routine list in the Coast Guard.

## BUSINESS MEETING

*Committee on Environment and Public Works:* Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of R. D. James, of Missouri, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense.

## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION OVERSIGHT

*Committee on Environment and Public Works:* Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, after receiving testimony from Kristine L. Svinicki, Chairman, and Jeff Baran, and Stephen Burns, both a Commissioner, all of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

## STRATEGIC, POLITICAL, AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS OF USING FORCE

*Committee on Foreign Relations:* Committee concluded a hearing to examine using force, focusing on strategic, political, and legal considerations, after receiving testimony from Stephen J. Hadley, former National Security Advisor, Christine E. Wormuth, former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and John B. Bellinger III, Council on Foreign Relation, all of Washington, D.C.

## TREATIES

*Committee on Foreign Relations:* Committee concluded a hearing to examine the extradition Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, signed at Pristina on March 29, 2016 (Treaty Doc. 115–2), the extradition Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Serbia, signed at Belgrade on August 15, 2016 (Treaty Doc. 115–1), the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Kiribati on the Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries, signed at Majuro on September 6, 2013, and the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia on the Delimitation of a Maritime Boundary, signed at Koror on August 1, 2014 (Treaty Doc. 114–13), and the United Nations Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade, done at New York on December 12, 2001, and signed by the United States on December 30, 2003 (Treaty Doc. 114–7), after receiving testimony from Richard Visek, Acting Legal Adviser, Department of State; and Bruce Swartz, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Justice.

## 21ST CENTURY CURES ACT

*Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:* Committee concluded a hearing to examine implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act, focusing on responding to mental health needs, after receiving testimony from Elinore F. McCance-Katz, Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services for Mental Health and Substance Use.

**BUSINESS MEETING**

*Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:* Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Johnny Collett, of Kentucky, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Mitchell Zais, of South Carolina, to be Deputy Secretary, and James Blew, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, all of the Department of Education, William Beach, of Kansas, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Kate S. O'Scannlain, of Maryland, to be Solicitor, and Scott A. Mugno, of Pennsylvania, and Preston Rutledge, of the District of Columbia, both to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of Labor.

**NOMINATIONS**

*Committee on the Judiciary:* Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Elizabeth L. Branch, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, and R. Stan Baker, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Georgia, who were introduced by Senators Isakson and Perdue, Charles Barnes Goodwin, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, who was introduced by Senator Lankford, Matthew J. Kacsmaryk, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Texas, Matthew Spencer Petersen, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, and Eli Jeremy Richardson, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee, who was introduced by Senators Alexander and Corker, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

**CONSUMER WELFARE STANDARD IN ANTITRUST**

*Committee on the Judiciary:* Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights concluded a hearing to examine the consumer welfare standard in antitrust, after receiving testimony from Abbott B. Lipsky, Jr., and Joshua D. Wright, both of the George Mason University Antonin Scalia Law School, Arlington, Virginia; Barry C. Lynn, Open Markets Institute, and Diana Moss, American Antitrust Institute, both of Washington, D.C.; and Carl Shapiro, University of California Haas School of Business, Berkeley.

# House of Representatives

## *Chamber Action*

**Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced:** 6 public bills, H.R. 4635–4640; 1 private bill, H.R. 4641; and 4 resolutions, H.J. Res. 124; and H. Res. 662–664, were introduced. **Page H9900**

**Additional Cosponsors:** **Page H9901**

**Report Filed:** A report was filed today as follows:

H.R. 4258, to amend the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 to strengthen the aerospace workforce pipeline by the promotion of Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program and National Aeronautics and Space Administration internship and fellowship opportunities to women, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–464). **Page H9900**

**Speaker:** Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Rogers (KY) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H9047**

**Recess:** The House recessed at 10:40 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H9851**

**Committee on Ethics Investigative Subcommittees:** The Chair announced that the Speaker or a designee and the Minority Leader or a designee shall each name a total of fifteen Members, Delegates, or the Resident Commissioner from the respective party of such individual who are not members of the Committee on Ethics to be available to serve on investigative subcommittees of that committee during the 115th Congress pursuant to clause 5(a)(4) of rule 10. **Page H9854**

**Investigative Subcommittees of the Committee on Ethics—Appointment:** The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to be available to serve on investigative subcommittees of the Committee on Ethics for the 115th Congress: Representatives Wagner, Walorski, Handel, Mimi Walters (CA) and Paulsen. **Page H9854**

**Investigative Subcommittees of the Committee on Ethics—Appointment:** Read a letter from Representative Pelosi, Minority Leader, in which she appointed the following Members to be available to serve on an Investigative Subcommittee established by the Committee on Ethics during the 115th Congress: Representatives Castro (TX), Jayapal, McEachin, Torres, and Tsongas. **Pages H9854–59**

**Recess:** The House recessed at 1:06 p.m. and reconvened at 1:20 p.m. **Page H9859**

**Recess:** The House recessed at 4:20 p.m. and reconvened at 4:47 p.m. **Page H9878**

**Privacy Notification Technical Clarification Act and Corporate Governance Reform and Transparency Act of 2017—Rule for Consideration:** The House agreed to H. Res. 657, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2396) to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to update the exception for certain annual notices provided by financial institutions, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4015) to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry, by a recorded vote of 240 ayes to 184 noes, Roll No. 679, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 236 yeas to 187 nays, Roll No. 678. **Pages H9860–68, H9878–79**

**Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act:** The House passed H.R. 1638, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, by a yea-and-nay vote of 289 yeas to 135 nays, Roll No. 680. **Pages H9868–78, H9879–80**

Pursuant to the Rule, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–47, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill. **Page H9875**

Agreed to:

Schneider amendment (No. 1 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–463) that amends the reporting requirement on recommendations for how U.S. economic sanctions against Iran may be revised to prevent funds or assets from being used to contribute to the continued development of Iran's ballistic missile program to also include human rights abuses; and **Pages H9876–77**

Meng amendment (No. 2 printed in part A of H. Rept. 115–463) that requires the report created by this bill to include "an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of U.S. economic sanctions programs against Iran". **Pages H9877–78**

H. Res. 658, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 1638) and (H.R. 4324) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 238 ayes to 182 noes, Roll No. 677, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 229 yeas to 189 nays, Roll No. 676. **Pages H9854–60**

**Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act:** The House considered H.R. 4324, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran. Consideration is expected to resume tomorrow, December 14th. **Page H9880**

Considered the Swallwell (CA) motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment. **Pages H9890–91**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–48 shall be considered as adopted, in lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill. **Page H9880**

Agreed to:

Gaetz amendment (No. 1 printed in part B of H. Rept. 115–463) that includes, in the report already required in the underlying text, certification that the transaction will not benefit anIranian person that has knowingly transported items used to establish in Syria a permanent military presence of either Iranian military forces or Iranian backed militia. **Pages H9889–90**

Res. 658, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 1638) and (H.R. 4324) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 238 ayes to 182 noes, Roll No. 677, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 229 yeas to 189 nays, Roll No. 676. **Pages H9854–60**

**Meeting Hour:** Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, December 14th. **Page H9891**

**Quorum Calls—Votes:** Three yea-and-nay votes and two recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H9859–60, H9860, H9878–79, H9879, and H9880. There were no quorum calls.

**Adjournment:** The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

# *Committee Meetings*

## MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

*Committee on Education and the Workforce:* Full Committee completed a markup on H.R. 4508, the "Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform Act". H.R. 4508 was ordered reported, as amended.

## EXAMINING THE DRUG SUPPLY CHAIN

*Committee on Energy and Commerce:* Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''Examining the Drug Supply Chain''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

## THE IMPACTS AND FUTURE OF NORTH AMERICAN ENERGY TRADE

*Committee on Energy and Commerce:* Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing entitled ''The Impacts and Future of North American Energy Trade''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

## MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

*Committee on Financial Services:* Full Committee completed a markup on H.R. 435, the ''Credit Access and Inclusion Act of 2017''; H.R. 1457, the ''Making Online Banking Initiation Legal and Easy Act of 2017''; H.R. 2219, the ''End Banking for Human Traffickers Act of 2017''; H.R. 2948, to amend the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 to provide a temporary license for loan originators transitioning between employers, and for other purposes; H.R. 3179, the ''Transparency and Accountability for Business Standards Act''; H.R. 3864, the ''Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2017''; H.R. 4464, the ''Common Sense Credit Union Capital Relief Act of 2017''; H.R. 4519, to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to repeal certain disclosure requirements related to resource extraction, and for other purposes; H.R. 4529, the ''Accelerating Access to Capital Act of 2017''; H.R. 4537, the ''International Insurance Standards Act of 2017''; H.R. 4545, the ''Financial Institutions Examination Fairness and Reform Act''; H.R. 4546, the ''National Securities Exchange Regulatory Parity Act''; and H.R. 4560, the ''GSE Jumpstart Reauthorization Act of 2017''. H.R. 3864, H.R. 4546, H.R. 4519, H.R. 4529, H.R. 4545, H.R. 2948, H.R. 3179, H.R. 4464, and H.R. 4560 were ordered reported, without amendment. H.R. 4537, H.R. 2219, H.R. 435, and H.R. 1457 were ordered reported, as amended.

## MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

*Committee on Homeland Security:* Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1486, the ''Securing American Non-Profit Organizations Against Terrorism Act of 2017''; H.R. 4433, the ''Securing Department of Homeland Security Firearms Act of 2017''; H.R. 4553, the ''Terrorist Screening and Targeting Review Act of 2017''; H.R. 4555, the ''DHS Interagency Counterterrorism Task Force Act of 2017''; H.R. 4559, the ''Global Aviation System Security Reform Act of 2017''; H.R. 4561, the ''Security Assessment Feasibility for Equipment Testing and Evaluation of Capabilities for our Homeland Act''; H.R. 4564, the ''Post-Caliphate Threat Assessment Act of 2017''; H.R. 4567, the ''DHS Overseas Personnel Enhancement Act of 2017''; H.R. 4569, the ''Counterterrorism Information Sharing Improvement Act of 2017''; H.R. 4577, the ''Domestic Explosives Detection Canine Capacity Building Act of 2017''; H.R. 4578, the ''Counter Terrorist Network Act''; and H.R. 4581, the ''Screening and Vetting Passenger Exchange Act of 2017''. H.R. 4561, H.R. 4559, H.R. 4567, H.R. 1486, H.R. 4577, H.R. 4555, H.R. 4553, and H.R. 4433 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 4564, H.R. 4569, H.R. 4578, and H.R. 4581 were ordered reported, without amendment.

## MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

*Committee on House Administration:* Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 4009, to authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to plan, design, and construct a central parking facility on National Zoological Park property in the District of Columbia; and a committee resolution updating the advertisement regulations found in the Members' Congressional Handbook. The committee resolution updating the advertisement regulations found in the Members' Congressional Handbook passed. H.R. 4009 was ordered reported, without amendment.

## OVERSIGHT HEARING WITH DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL ROD ROSENSTEIN

*Committee on the Judiciary:* Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Oversight Hearing with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein''. Testimony was heard from Rod Rosenstein, Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice.

## MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

*Committee on Natural Resources:* Full Committee completed a markup on H.R. 200, the ''Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act''; H.R. 1157, to clarify the United States interest in certain submerged lands in the area of the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, and for other purposes; H.R. 1349, to amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, and game carts is not prohibited in Wilderness Areas, and for other purposes; H.R. 1350, to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes; H.R. 1675, the ''National Landslide Preparedness Act''; H.R. 2888, the ''Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Establishment Act''; H.R. 3588, the ''RED SNAPPER Act''; H.R. 4033, the ''National Geologic Mapping Act Reauthorization Act''; H.R. 4264, the ''Hyde Park Land Conveyance

Act''; H.R. 4266, the ''Acadia National Park Boundary Clarification Act''; H.R. 4465, the ''Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017''; H.R. 4475, the ''National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System Act''; H.R. 4568, the ''Enhancing Geothermal Production on Federal Lands Act''; S. 825, the ''Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium Land Transfer Act of 2017''; and S. 1285, the ''Oregon Tribal Economic Development Act''. H.R. 200, H.R. 1349, H.R. 1675, H.R. 4266, H.R. 4475, and H.R. 4568 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 1157, H.R. 1350, H.R. 2888, H.R. 3588, H.R. 4033, H.R. 4264, H.R. 4465, S. 825, and S. 1285 were ordered reported, without amendment.

### OVERSIGHT OF THE BUREAU OF PRISONS AND INMATE REENTRY

*Committee on Oversight and Government Reform:* Full Committee held a hearing entitled, ''Oversight of the Bureau of Prisons and Inmate Reentry''. Testimony was heard from Mark S. Inch, Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons; Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General, Department of Justice; Diana Maurer, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

### HEAD HEALTH CHALLENGE: PREVENTING HEAD TRAUMA FROM FOOTBALL FIELD TO SHOP FLOOR TO BATTLEFIELD

*Committee on Science, Space, and Technology:* Subcommittee on Research and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Head Health Challenge: Preventing Head Trauma from Football Field to Shop Floor to Battlefield''. Testimony was heard from Michael Fasolka, Acting Director, Material Measurement Lab, National Institute of Standards and Technology; and public witnesses.

### ADVANCING SOLAR ENERGY TECHNOLOGY: RESEARCH TRUMPS DEPLOYMENT

*Committee on Science, Space, and Technology:* Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing entitled ''Advancing Solar Energy Technology: Research Trumps Deployment''. Testimony was heard from Daniel Simmons, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy; and public witnesses.

### PRE-DISCHARGE CLAIMS PROGRAMS: ARE VA AND DOD EFFECTIVELY SERVING SEPARATING MILITARY PERSONNEL?

*Committee on Veterans' Affairs:* Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing entitled ''Pre-Discharge Claims Programs: Are VA and DOD Effectively Serving Separating Military Personnel?''. Testimony was heard from Terry A. Adirim, M.D., Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Services Policy and Oversight, Department of Defense; Willie C. Clark, Sr., Deputy Under Secretary for Field Operations, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

### IRS REFORM: THE TAXPAYER'S EXPERIENCE

*Committee on Ways and Means:* Subcommittee on Oversight held a hearing entitled ''IRS Reform: The Taxpayer's Experience''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

## *Joint Meetings*

### TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT

*Conferees* met to resolve the differences between the Senate and House passed versions of H.R. 1, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, but did not complete action thereon.

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## NEW PUBLIC LAWS

*(For last listing of Public Laws, see* DAILY DIGEST, *p. D1304)*

H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year. Signed on December 12, 2017. (Public Law 115–91)

H.R. 4374, to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to authorize additional emergency uses for medical products to reduce deaths and severity of injuries caused by agents of war. Signed on December 12, 2017. (Public Law 115–92)

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## COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2017

*(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)*

### Senate

*Committee on Armed Services:* to hold hearings to examine United States policy and strategy in the Middle East, 10 a.m., SD–G50.

*Committee on Foreign Relations:* to receive a closed briefing on new counterterrorism guidance, 10 a.m., SVC–217.

*Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:* to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Margaret Weichert, of Georgia, to be Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget, 10 a.m., SD–342.

*Committee on the Judiciary:* business meeting to consider S. 2152, to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for assistance for victims of child pornography, and the nominations of Stuart Kyle Duncan, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, David Ryan Stras, of Minnesota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, Fernando Rodriguez, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, Andrei Iancu, of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and Duane A. Kees, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas, Stephen R. McAllister, to be United States Attorney for the District of Kansas, Ronald A. Parsons, Jr., to be United States Attorney for the District of South Dakota, Ryan K. Patrick, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas, and Michael B. Stuart, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of West Virginia, all of the Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

*Select Committee on Intelligence:* to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2 p.m., SH–219.

## House

*Committee on Financial Services,* Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade, hearing entitled ''Examining the Operations of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS)'', 9 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

*Committee on Foreign Affairs,* Full Committee, markup on H.R. 2219, the ''End Banking for Human Traffickers Act of 2017''; H.R. 2646, the ''United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Extension Act''; H.R. 1997, the ''Ukraine Cybersecurity Cooperation Act of 2017''; and H.R. 3851, the ''War Crimes Rewards Expansion Act'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

*Committee on Natural Resources,* Subcommittee on Federal Lands, hearing on H.R. 4558, the ''Grand Staircase Escalante Enhancement Act'', 9:30 a.m., 1334 Longworth.

## Joint Meetings

*Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe:* to hold hearings to examine assessing accomplishments and challenges of the Magnitsky Act, 9:30 a.m., SD–562.

*Next Meeting of the* SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, December 14

Senate Chamber

**Program for Thursday:** Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of James C. Ho, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, postcloture.

*Next Meeting of the* HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, December 14

House Chamber

**Program for Thursday:** Consideration of H.R. 2396—Privacy Notification Technical Clarification Act. Complete consideration of H.R. 4324—Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act.

## Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

HOUSE

Babin, Brian, Tex., E1696, E1697
Boyle, Brendan F., Pa., E1694
Cartwright, Matt, Pa., E1692
Cohen, Steve, Tenn., E1693
Correa, J. Luis, Calif., E1691
Costa, Jim, Calif., E1698
Davis, Danny K., Ill., E1697
Duncan, John J., Jr., Tenn., E1697
Gutiérrez, Luis V., Ill., E1692
Kelly, Trent, Miss., E1691, E1691, E1692, E1693, E1694, E1696, E1697, E1698
Lipinski, Daniel, Ill., E1691
Luetkemeyer, Blaine, Mo., E1692, E1692, E1693, E1694, E1695, E1696
McCollum, Betty, Minn., E1694
Rogers, Mike, Ala., E1696
Sanford, Mark, S.C., E1696
Scott, Robert C. ''Bobby'', Va., E1693
Sessions, Pete, Tex., E1698
Smith, Christopher H., N.J., E1695
Wilson, Joe, S.C., E1696

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